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"One more go..."—Gamers playing *Star Wars* videogames over the last 30 years!

I'm writing this welcome to you after devoting an entire weekend to playing Kinect *Star Wars*. My limbs are exhausted—I can barely type!—but I think I've got what it takes to be a Jedi. And not only did I discover a hitherto unknown ability to use the Force, but Han, Leia and Lando have taught me to dance! If you could time travel and show Kinect *Star Wars* to anyone playing the very first *Star Wars* videogame back in 1982, they'd be stunned. *The Empire Strikes Back* was an amazing achievement and hugely playable, but videogames have evolved so much during the whirlwind that's been the last 30 years. This issue, we're celebrating 30 years of LucasArts by looking back at the videogames that allowed us to be Jedi, Sith, bounty hunters, and pilots—both for the good guys and the baddies! Who knows what the games of the next 30 years will look like...

Which neatly brings us to the big announcement at E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo): *Star Wars 1313* is coming! Set in the underworld of Coruscant, it's action packed, thrilling, and, of course, state of the art. Expect this one to be another classic!

Thanks to everybody who voted in the first *Star Wars Insider Awards*! We're currently preparing our award-winners issue—out on October 23. Will your favorites make the grade? Find out next time around!

If you're heading out to Florida for Celebration VI, don't forget to come and say hi. We'll not only have a booth at the show, but we'll also be running a panel where we'll be revealing secrets behind the scenes of the magazine, and hearing what you think.

See you there! Now, back to the dance floor....

May the Force be with you all,

Jonathan

Jonathan Wilkins,
Editor

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2012

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DOCKING BAY

THIS ISSUE....

"THESE X-WINGS CAN HANDLE ANYTHING THE EMPIRE CAN THROW AT US!"—RAYMUS ANTILLES.
STAR WARS: EMPIRE AT WAR (2006)

THESE X-WINGS CAN HANDLE ANYTHING THE EMPIRE CAN THROW AT US!"—RAYMUS ANTILLES.
STAR WARS: EMPIRE AT WAR (2006)

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COVER STORY!

This issue of *Star Wars Insider* is available with a different cover exclusively for subscribers. There's also an exclusive cover image that is available only at selected comic stores! To get your subscriber's cover every issue, go to www.likemagazines.com

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NEWSSTAND EDITION



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COMIC STORE EXCLUSIVE

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LAUNCH

THE LATEST UPDATES FROM THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE



STAR WARS GOES UNDERGROUND!

LUCASARTS UNVEILS *STAR WARS 1313*

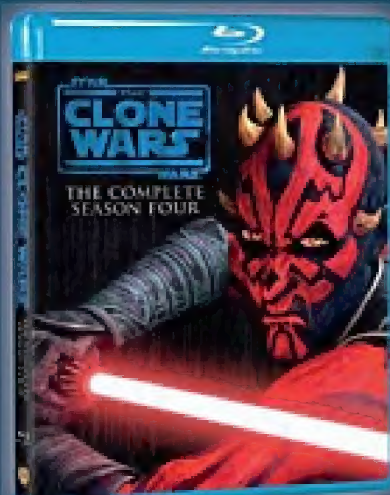
At the 2012 Electronics Entertainment Expo (E3) last June, LucasArts announced its new internally developed videogame franchise, *Star Wars 1313*, a game that promises to plunge players into the most dangerous depths of Coruscant's criminal underworld. Players will take control of a lethal bounty hunter in the never-before-explored expanses of Level 1313, deep below the surface of the galactic capital. Using an arsenal of exotic weaponry to hunt down marks, the player must also uncover the truth surrounding a criminal conspiracy in this third-person cinematic action-adventure game.

A bold new take on the *Star Wars* galaxy, *Star Wars 1313* is intended for mature audiences. The game will also emphasize epic set pieces and fast-paced combat with a mortal, well-equipped hero who cannot rely on the Force to survive his or her dangerous environment. The game benefits from an integrated development approach that brings together artists from across the entire Lucasfilm organization, LucasArts, Industrial Light & Magic, Lucasfilm Animation, and Skywalker Sound.

Look for more coverage in future issues of *Star Wars Insider*—and keep an eye on www.StarWars1313.com for new details as they surface from the treacherous depths.



PAD



DARTH MAUL FORCE LEAPS TO THE TOP OF SEASON FIVE

SEEMS LIKE THE SITH LORD JUST CAN'T WAIT...

Last issue, we revealed several episode titles for the upcoming season of *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, naming the season premiere as "A War on Two Fronts." As a wise Jedi once said, "Always in motion is the future." As the season premiere approaches, episode order will occasionally change; in fact we can now confirm that the Season Five debut will instead be "Revival," an episode that continues the Darth Maul storyline begun in Season Four.

Maul's presence will continue to shake up *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. Fans at Disney's Star Wars Weekends were treated to an explosive trailer that showed new footage of the resurrected Sith Lord. Fittingly, Darth Maul also graces the cover of The Complete Season Four DVD and Blu-ray set (above) scheduled for release this fall. Not bad for a guy presumed dead for over 10 years!



ANTHONY DANIELS TO SHINE AT CELEBRATION VI MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE DROID

The galaxy of stars at Celebration VI keeps expanding! Anthony Daniels will be a special guest at the biggest party in the galaxy from August 23-26, 2012, in Orlando, Florida. The man behind C-3PO is slated to sign autographs all four days of the show, as well as appear on stage.

Daniels has been a headlining star at all six *Star Wars* Celebrations as well as Celebration Europe and Celebration Japan, bringing with him his inimitable stage presence and gift as a raconteur. As C-3PO, Daniels brought life, endearing humanity, and hapless humor to the droid, portraying the world famous character across multiple media, from radio dramas to museum tours, and theme park rides to breakfast cereal commercials. Visit www.StarWarsCelebration.com for all the latest news on this can't-miss event!

AND THERE'S MORE!

Convention attendees can also expect to see the following recently announced guests: Ben Burtt (supervising sound editor/sound designer), Jake Lloyd (Anakin Skywalker), Kenny Baker (R2-D2), Amy Allen (Aayla Secura), Chris Malcolm (Zev), Bonnie Piesse (Aunt Beru), and Garrick Hagon (Biggs).

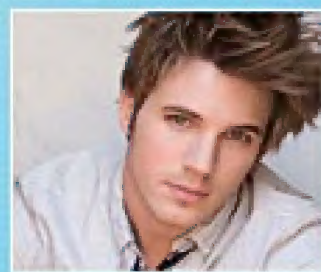
EXPANDED

Visit www.starwarscelebration.com/ for the latest updates and to buy tickets!

UNIVERSE

ANAKIN TO MARRY!

Congratulations to *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*' Anakin Skywalker, Matt Lanter (right), who has announced that he is to marry his long-term girlfriend, Angela Stacy!



NEW IDENTITIES

AN INNOVATIVE NEW *STAR WARS*® EXHIBITION REVEALED

INSIDER SPOKE WITH KYRA BOWLING, EXHIBITS MANAGER AT LUCASFILM, ABOUT AN EXCITING NEW EXHIBITION THAT'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE.



Star Wars Insider: Why launch this exhibit in Canada?

Kyra Bowling: We have a *Star Wars* exhibit that's currently touring in the United States, but we don't currently have one in the international market. We're so blessed with such a great fan base and we really thought the timing was right to get something in development and put it out there to start touring around the world.

SWI: There are some absolutely priceless artifacts for fans to see. What measures are taken to ensure it stays in one piece?

KB: We've got about 200 objects from all the *Star Wars* movies and we actually consider our shows high-security type shows—like the kind you might see at a fine art museum—so we take every

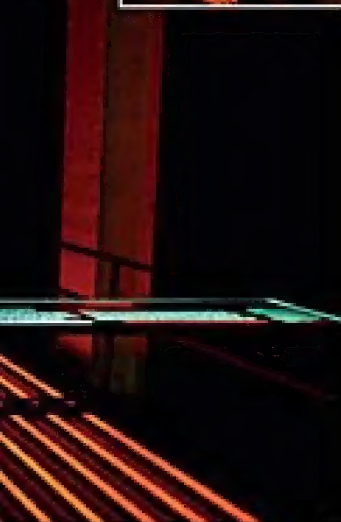
precaution. Our wonderful project partners (X3 Productions and our host venues) provide several layers of security for the exhibit: audible alarmed platforms, glazed and alarmed cases, security cameras and staff, etc. And of course we take every precaution when the items are in transit, both in packing and logistically, as objects move from venue to venue.

We have something from all the films and some of these objects and models, especially from some of the earlier films, were done for production purposes and not really meant to last for something like an exhibit all these years later. We have to be really mindful and keep a very close watch on their condition. We go through a very thorough, industry standard condition report as the objects come into each new

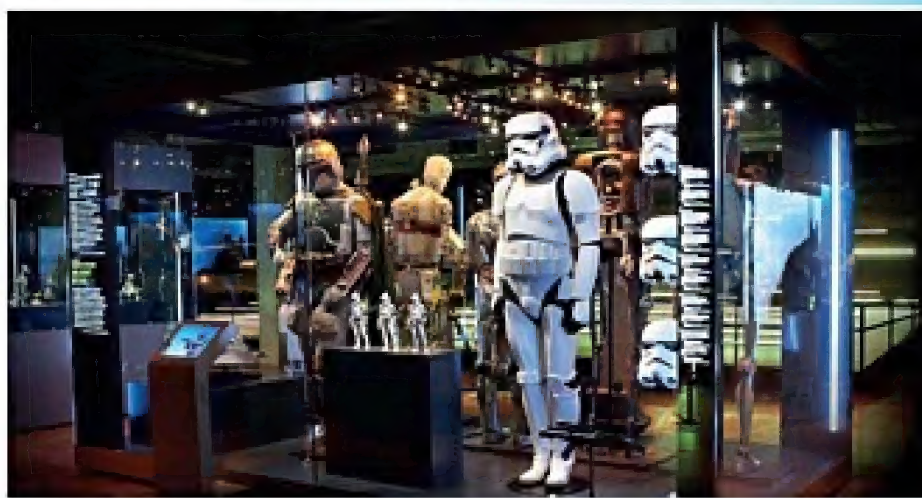
museum and as they get ready to depart. There are also some things that had to stay in the Archives, just because of their fragile condition.

SWI: How does the interactive element of the exhibit work?

KB: We took very good care to make sure that this was designed and developed as a formal exhibit. It's really grounded in science as well; we have great storylines and great content talking about the nature of identity and the 10 different influences that go into what shapes your identity. As a connective thread throughout the exhibit, we created interactive stations that speak to each of those 10 things, but they also let you create your own *Star Wars* avatar. You're answering questions about the content,



Far left: By the time you leave the exhibit, you could be as wise as Yoda! Left: The always awesome Darth Vader. Top: Han in carbonite is in no position to appreciate Leia's attire! Above, right: Anakin's costume and speeder. Above right: The Empire's fleet. Right: Boba Fett and the Stormtrooper armor. Above: Awesome aliens!



but as you do, it's kind of a progressive character development, which you then see manifested in the conclusion gallery. You're not quite sure what it's all building up to until you get to the very end....

SWI: How important is the educational element to the show?

KB: I think it's very important. There are so many great messages in there that may make kids and families and fans see *Star Wars* in a whole new light. I think it gives a whole new perspective on the characters and the films and about yourself, too.

SWA: You worked with scientists from the Montreal Science Center and Canadian universities. What did they bring to the project?

KB: We didn't want to trivialize the science—we wanted to make it fun and accessible—but we wanted to make sure we were presenting correct and accurate information. It was a great committee; we just continued to hone the content and everybody could weigh in, review it, and bless it. It was a lovely collaborative experience.

SWA: What are the must-see artifacts?

KB: If you're a hardcore fan, you might find something like the Stormtrooper helmets from the original trilogy interesting because they changed and there are nuanced differences between all of those. If you're going as a family, you might really get excited by some of the interactive questions where they talk about parenting styles and the choices you can make.

If you're just on your own and want to "ooh" and "aah!" over some amazing objects, I think Anakin's full-size Podracer is really exciting; or if you happen to be a fashionista, we've got some wonderful costumes from the female characters in the films.

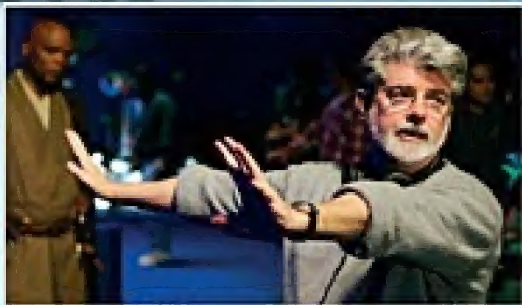
EXPANDED

Star Wars Identities is at the Montreal Science Center until September 16, before moving to the Telus World of Science, Edmonton, from October 27 to April 1, 2013.

For the latest updates and announcements of upcoming venues read *Insider* and visit www.starwarsidentities.com

UNIVERSE

LAUNCHPAD



GEORGE LUCAS' RETIREMENT PLANS BEGIN

KATHLEEN KENNEDY TO BECOME CO-CHAIR OF LUCASFILM LTD.

Lucasfilm has announced that Kathleen Kennedy will become Co-Chair of the company as George Lucas prepares to retire. Lucas will become Co-Chairman of the Board and continue as CEO.

"I've spent my life building Lucasfilm, and as I shift my focus into other directions I wanted to make sure it was in the hands of someone equipped to carry my vision into the future," said George Lucas. "It was important that my successor not only be someone with great creative passion and proven leadership abilities, but also someone who loves movies. I care deeply about my employees—it is their creativity and hard work that has made this company what it is today. As the company grows and expands, I wanted to be sure the employees of Lucasfilm have a strong captain for the ship. I also care deeply about our fans and it was important to have someone who would carry on the passion and care that I've given the films over the years. So for me Kathy was the obvious choice, she is a trusted friend and one of the most respected producers and executives in the industry."

"George is a true visionary," said Kathleen Kennedy. "I've seen him build Lucasfilm from a small rebel unit in Northern California to an international fully integrated entertainment company. I'm excited to have the chance to work with such an extraordinary group of talented people. George and I have talked about the enormous opportunities that lie ahead for the company, and as George moves towards retirement I am honored that he trusts me with taking care of the beloved film franchises. I feel fortunate to have George working with me for the next year or two as I take on this role—it is nice to have Yoda by your side."

IN SAFE HANDS

Seven-time Academy Award® nominated Kathleen Kennedy is one of the most successful and esteemed producers and executives in the film industry. As a producer, she has an impeccable record with a robust filmography, having worked with such filmmakers as Steven Spielberg, Peter Jackson, Martin Scorsese, Robert Zemeckis, Barry Levinson, Clint Eastwood, David Fincher, and Gary Ross. As a testament to her standing in the film community, she previously held the position of governor and officer of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and currently serves as a member of the board of trustees. She is also a former President of the Producers Guild of America.

Kennedy produced the *Indiana Jones* and *Jurassic Park* franchises, and *The Bourne Legacy*, and has received Oscar nominations for *War Horse*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The Sixth Sense*, and *Seabiscuit*.



ART EXCLUSIVE!

Young Luke by Tsuyoshi Nagano
This beautiful artwork was originally intended for a project in the Japanese market. It's reproduced here for the first time and will be featured in an upcoming book on the artwork of Tsuyoshi Nagano.

DARTH'S NEW DATE

The Scholastic Darth Maul novel *Shadow Conspiracy* is now slated for January 2013, not September 2012.



MON MOTHMA'S 5 FACTS [1 FAKE]

FIVE AMAZING FACTS—CAN YOU SPOT THE OUT-AND-OUT LIE?

- 1** The Jedi Sharrad Hett became a warlord in a tribe of Tusken Raiders.
- 2** R2-D2 fell in love with a fire hydrant when he appeared on Sesame Street.
- 3** The Ewoks' phrase "Yub yub" means "Let's go!"
- 4** According to Ahmed Best, Michael Jackson wanted to play the role of Jar Jar Binks.
- 5** Ugnaught children are called Uglings.

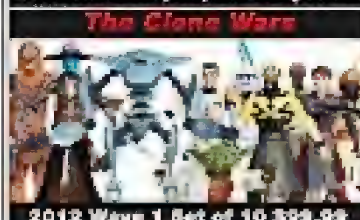
ANSWER:

5. Is the fake. Ugnaught children are actually called Uglings.

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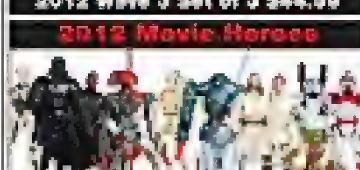
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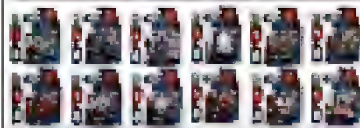
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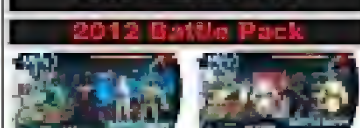
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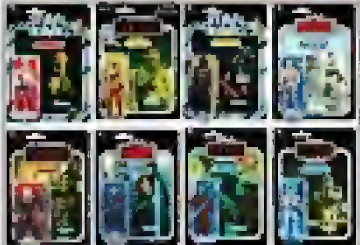
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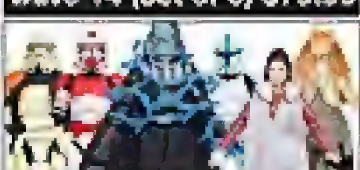
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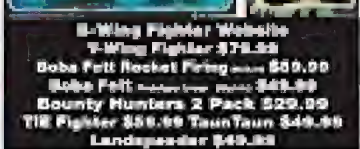
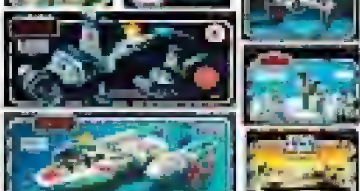
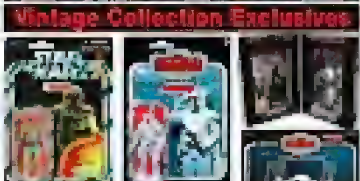
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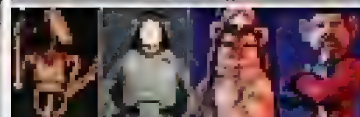
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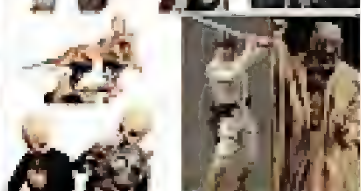
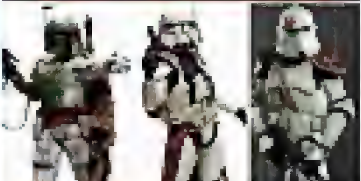


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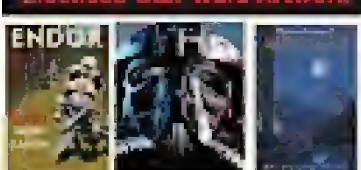
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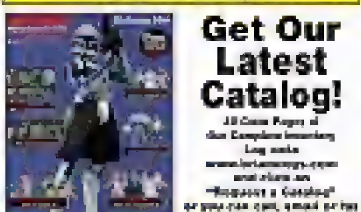
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GAME ON!

THE FIRST OFFICIAL INTERACTIVE *STAR WARS* ADVENTURE BURST ONTO THE SCENE 30 YEARS AGO, FIVE LONG YEARS AFTER THE PREMIER OF *A NEW HOPE*. GAME DESIGNER TONY A. ROWE EXPLORES THREE DECADES OF VIDEOGAMES AND BEYOND.



Above: The unofficial game *Star Fire* (1979) that nearly became the first *Star Wars* game!



Right: Promotional art for two of the earliest *Star Wars* videogames, Parker Bros. *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) and *Jedi Arena* (1983).

UNOFFICIAL BEGINNINGS

Long before the first official *Star Wars* videogame, many unlicensed developers tried their hands at bringing the space fantasy to the video screen.

Hardware developer Objective Design, Inc. began selling a "*Star Wars* simulation" game in early 1978. More than just a tech demo, the game featured X-wings and TIE fighters dueling in three dimensions in order to re-create the climactic attack on the Death Star. To play, intrepid gamers built their own joysticks and needed an Altair or similar computer system with Objective's character generator hardware installed.

Arcade gamers got their first chance to live out their pseudo *Star Wars* fantasies with Exidy's *Star Fire* (1979). Players shot hordes of TIE fighters with the four cannons of their X-wing-like craft. Developers David Rolfe and Ted Michon designed the game with the intent to secure the *Star Wars* license before starting production, but publisher Exidy failed to acquire approval from Lucasfilm and changed little more than the game's name before it hit the arcades.

Star Fire therefore goes down in arcade history as the first game to feature a "sit down" cockpit cabinet and the first to enable players to personalize their high scores with their initials. In fact, entering the initials "T2M" triggered the secret message, "Hi Ted. May the Force be with you." The game played a pivotal role in the 1980 Disney movie *Midnight Madness* when a young Michael J. Fox proves himself as a *Star Fire* champion.

THE FIRST HOME VIDEOGAMES

By 1981, the home videogame industry was booming. Parker Brothers, makers of board game hits such as *Monopoly* and *Risk*, created its own studio to develop game software in efforts to broaden their market. They hired several engineers and set them to task to reverse-engineer the Atari 2600 hardware. Parker and its sister company, Kenner Products, shared an exclusive license to create "toys and games" based on the *Star Wars* franchise, but it was unclear if the rights covered video games. Parker asserted that a game is a game and assigned programmer Rex Bradford and designer Sam Kyllman to create a *Star Wars* title for the Atari system. Unsure if the nascent studio could create quality software, Lucasfilm





representatives insisted on a tour of Parker's facility. If they were lacking, all videogame rights would go to Atari. Still stalling up, Parker's large studio space was mostly empty; the marketing department pulled workers from their assembly line, dressed them in white lab coats, instructed them not to speak, and seated them at unpowered computer terminals to fill space. The ruse failed, but Parker's game design and marketing plan were solid. Lucas split the terms of the license: home console games to Parker Brothers, arcade games to Atari. Parker's first title, *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) was a huge success. Players piloted a lone snowspeeder to battle an endless line of Imperial walkers. The innovative game featured fluid controls, a radar display, the ability to repair one's speeder, and increasingly tougher waves of enemies. The first official *Star Wars* game had arrived—and it wouldn't be the last. In 1983, Parker followed its success with *Jedi Arena*, *Star Wars: The Arcade Game*, and *Return of the Jedi Death Star Battle*. A fourth title, *Ewok Adventure*, went unreleased due in part to the crash of the home videogame industry at the end of the year. Soon after, Parker Brothers closed its videogame division.

ATARI'S ARCADE ACTION

While *Return of the Jedi* broke box-office records in 1983, Atari paid a cool one million dollar licensing fee to create a new arcade game, simply titled *Star Wars*. Designer Mike Hally's creation put players directly into the cockpit of Luke's X-wing, dogfighting TIE fighters, and dodging turbolaser towers on the Death Star surface—all culminating in the torpedoing of the two-meter-wide exhaust port at the end of the trench run. This masterpiece featured the first occurrence of digitized speech from a film in a videogame and was complemented by John Williams' music booming through the speakers.

The vector graphics engine from an unreleased game called *Warp Speed* (by Ed Rotberg and Jed Margolin) made its first-person perspective possible. Vector displays were the high-definition graphics of the day; the fluid movement and scaling of wireframe shapes created an unparalleled sense of 3D.

The game was also packed with secrets to discover. Players gained bonus shields by shooting Darth Vader's TIE more than 30 times. If they looked closely at the Death Star, they could read the names of the developers or an encouraging "May the Force be with you." They could earn an incredible 100,000 points in the trench run by following Obi-Wan's advice to "Use the Force" and shoot nothing but the exhaust port.

It didn't matter that the game was a rail shooter with little freedom of movement; it sounded great, looked great, and kept players on the edge of their seats until the Death Star was vaporized into a blazing fireball. This game has stood the test of time and is still considered one of the best *Star Wars* titles ever.

For *Return of the Jedi* (1984), Atari chose traditional raster graphics (a dot matrix data structure representing a generally rectangular grid of pixels, or points of color) and an overhead view. Gameplay alternated between ground combat with Imperials on the Forest Moon of Endor and piloting the Millennium Falcon into the heart of the second Death Star. The constant switching between scenarios and diagonal scrolling frustrated players, while the overhead perspective lacked the visual impact of the first game.

Atari returned to vector graphics with *The Empire Strikes Back* (1985). Essentially a modification of the original *Star Wars* game hardware, *Empire* players piloted snowspeeders blasting probe droids and Imperial Walkers on Hoth. Much like the film, the best vehicle combat was at the beginning. The anti-climactic final stage, escaping Imperials through an asteroid field, couldn't match the excitement of winding past AT-ATs to topple them with tow cables.



Above: Atari's much-loved *Star Wars* Arcade machine.

Right: Use the Force, George! George Lucas tests out the sit-down version of the Atari game in 1983.





JUMP, LUKE! JUMP!

Namco, creator of arcade hits such as *Pac-Man* and *Pole Position*, created the next new home game, creatively titled *Star Wars* (1987). This first platform game for the franchise took many liberties in adapting the film's storyline for the Famicom (Japan's version of the Nintendo Entertainment System). Ironically, the farm-boy from a desert world shows impeccable swimming skills on the water world of Iskalon. Unexplained Egyptian temples replace the spice mines of Kessel. With C-3PO's help, Luke talks a whale into giving him a ride on the ice planet of Hoth. Back on Tatooine, Luke ascends to the top of a Jawa sandcrawler to find Darth Vader waiting for him. Things got really weird when the Sith Lord suddenly transformed into a giant scorpion! Vader later becomes a shark, a winged beast, and even a wampa. The pseudo-Vaders were intended as illusions representing Luke's fears, like the Cave of Evil scene in *The Empire Strikes Back*. However, players were just confused.

Up to that moment, one company that was strangely missing from the roster was Lucasfilm's own internal game studio. Lucasfilm Games was forbidden from creating their own *Star Wars* games for risk of losing money if sales tanked. Conversely, Lucasfilm received a hefty fee, sans risk, by selling the *Star Wars* license to other game companies. This changed in 1991 when the exclusive licenses held by Broderbund and Domark to create home computer versions of *Star Wars* arcade



games expired. George Lucas then allowed his own studio to design a new game named [again] *Star Wars*, this time for the Nintendo Entertainment System. This platformer, a joint venture with publisher JVC, featured good graphics, great sound, and a thumb-blistering level of difficulty. The player started out as Luke, but had the choice of switching to Han, Leia, or Obi-Wan as the game progressed.

Next up, *The Empire Strikes Back* (1992) for NES used the same game engine but improved on both level design and vehicle combat. Luke, however, was now the only playable character. The game also broke with the film's storyline: The epic boss battle ended in Darth Vader's death.

Lucasfilm Games and JVC launched the 16-bit era with their epic "super trilogy" for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System: *Super Star Wars* (1992), *Super Empire Strikes Back* (1993), and *Super Return of the Jedi* (1995). The games featured big, bold sprites with fluid animations, gigantic boss battles, stereo sound, and the same unforgiving platforming difficulty seen in the previous two NES games. Thanks to the Super Nintendo's Mode 7 graphics, the vehicle combat scenes played in glorious 3D. (A DOS version of *Super Star Wars* was completed but never released.) *Super ESB* added a much-needed password-continue system to the series and the final game of the trilogy gave gamers a playable Ewok. These are still considered some of the best-looking Super Nintendo games ever.



Top, from left: Approaching the Death Star! *Star Wars*, 1987. Game Over! Vader appears to tempt players of *The Empire Strikes Back*. AT-AT attack! *The Empire Strikes Back*, 1992.

Above, from left: Luke encounters some deadly scorpions on the Sandcrawler in *Star Wars* (1987). Han gets his revenge on Jabba the Hutt in *Super Return of the Jedi*, 1995.



"THIS AIN'T LIKE DUSTING CROPS, BOY!"

In 1990, Lucasfilm Games and Hughes Aircraft Company formed an unprecedented partnership to design a fully interactive *Star Wars* flight simulator for theme parks. Hughes leveraged its military flight simulator technologies to create an "interactive public entertainment attraction" called the Mirage system. Each Mirage "pod" cockpit would've held a pilot and a gunner with a wrap-around display projecting the "aircraft's" surroundings. Up to 64 pods would network together for competitive or cooperative missions. Even gamers waiting in line for a pod played would have used controls to man stationary gun turrets on the ground. This was exactly the type of assignment project lead David Fox, Lucasfilm Games' second employee, had dreamed of since starting with the company in 1982. Unfortunately, the technology proved to be too expensive and the project was shelved. Fox left Lucasfilm soon after to pursue other theme park design projects.

M. N. M. Software put Japanese computer gamers back in the X-wing cockpit with *Attack on the Death Star* (1992). *Attack* was similar to the *Star Wars* arcade game, but used 3D wireframe graphics and digitized speech in ways Atari never could in 1983. The entire Yavin 4 briefing scene was recreated shot for shot. Instead of a lonely, rail-shooter mission, players had full flight control and communicated with wingmen via radio chatter. TIE fighters could outmaneuver the player and tail them through the Death Star trench. Novice filmmakers could even record entire game sessions and play them back from different camera angles. Released only in Japan, few gamers had a chance to play this gem.

After creating three hit World War II flight simulators for Lucasfilm Games (*Battlehawks 1942*, *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*, and *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*), Lawrence Holland was ready to leave the company. SWotL's huge scope and late delivery had worn him out. "There are stories about the security guard coming by at 3:00 a.m. and finding me asleep on the couch. I think I lived at Lucasfilm for about a year." Only one irresistible challenge kept him back. The offer he couldn't refuse: design a *Star Wars* flight simulator.

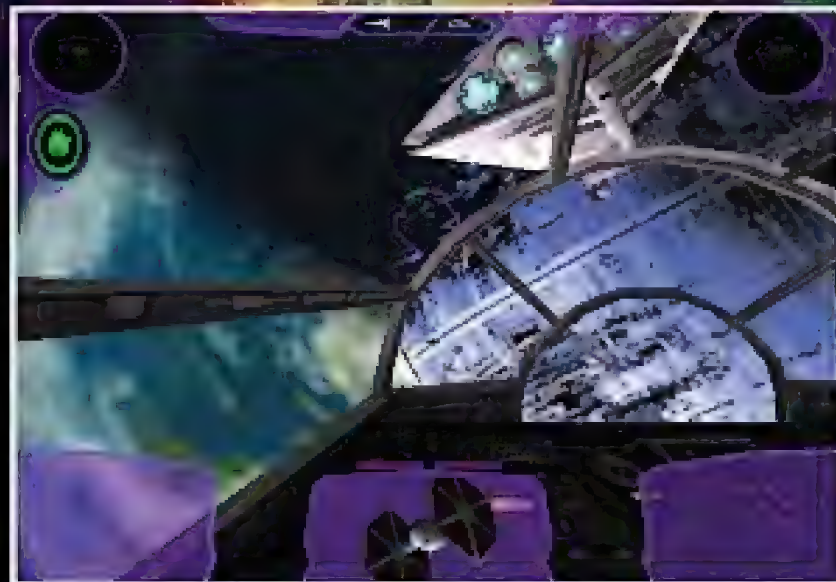
Holland's *X-Wing* (1993) became the first *Star Wars* game completely developed internally at Lucasfilm (previous projects were joint efforts with

Above: The spectacular box art for *TIE Fighter* (1994).

Right: The pilot's view from the inside of the TIE fighter cockpit.

Far right: Two images from the little seen Japanese game, *Attack on the Death Star* (1992).

Far right, top: The *Star Wars* Battlefront series (2004-1) mixed action on the ground with epic vehicle-based confrontations.



JVCI. The first *Star Wars* game published under LucasArts, the new name of Lucasfilm Games, perfectly simulated the feel of the WWII-styled dogfights of *A New Hope*. The deep gameplay and rich storyline immersed computer gamers in the *Star Wars* universe without relying solely on the events of the films. Two "Tour of Duty" mission packs expanded the game further.

TIE Fighter (1994), the first game told from the point of view of the Galactic Empire, improved upon *X-Wing*'s excellent gameplay. As an Imperial pilot, the player started from humble beginnings patrolling trade routes to crushing rebellions to becoming the "Emperor's Hand" and Darth Vader's wingman. The game showed Imperials as complex characters, not just generic villains.

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter's (1997) introduction of multiplayer online space battles overshadowed its lack of a strong storyline. In the series' grand finale: **X-Wing Alliance** (1999), the player was a merchant caught in the conflict between the Empire and Rebel Alliance. Light freighters like the *Millennium Falcon* were playable and the game concluded with a massive space battle to destroy the second Death Star.

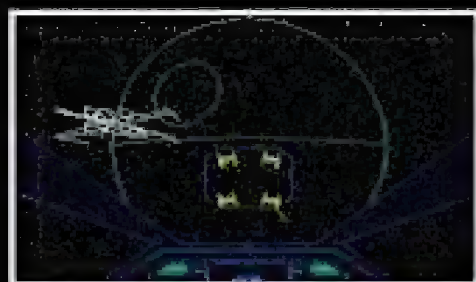


"IT'S THEM! BLAST THEM!"

The success of id Software's *Doom II* inspired LucasArts to enter the first-person shooter genre. Moving beyond *Doom*'s simple "find the key" objectives, **Dark Forces** (1995) challenged gamers with more cerebral puzzles. Players saw the *Star Wars* galaxy through the eyes of mercenary Rebel agent Kyle Katarn. Clever weapons, great level design, and solid gameplay made this "first-person blaster" an instant hit. The animation as the Stormtroopers flew backward when blasted was particularly satisfying.

Kyle learns the ways of the Force in **Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II** (1997). This is the first game to track player's actions as they went either to the light or dark sides of the Force. Each path unlocked different sets of Force powers, encouraging multiple playthroughs to experience the game from both sides. Online multiplayer gave the thrill of crossing sabers with opponents from across the Internet. **Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith** (1998) starred Kyle's apprentice, Jan Ors, in a mission to redeem her Master. **Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast** (2002) returned a despondent Kyle to the lead role. Unfortunately, the gameplay suffered when Kyle gave up his lightsaber for the first half of the game. In **Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy** (2003), Kyle was out of the picture: The player started as an apprentice (with a lightsaber, fortunately) and built up Force powers over time. This was the first game where players customize the appearance of their Jedi and weapon.

Battlefront (2004) put players into the boots of the common trooper on the front lines of the biggest *Star Wars* battles from the prequel and classic trilogy eras. **Battlefront II** (2005) added space combat and hero characters on both sides of the conflict. The series continued with several releases for Sony PSP and Nintendo DS handhelds.



EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

With so many *Star Wars* movies, games, novels, comic books, and even radio plays, it was difficult to create something new.

BioWare solved this problem by setting its role-playing game thousands of years in the past. Any events that took place in *Knights of the Old Republic* (2003, loosely based on the comic book of the same name) were ancient history by the time Yoda is born. The time period freed BioWare's storytellers to craft an epic tale with far-reaching consequences without upsetting continuity. Rich with dialogue, conversation skills were nearly as important as combat skills. This RPG classic consistently tops the lists of best *Star Wars* games of all time.

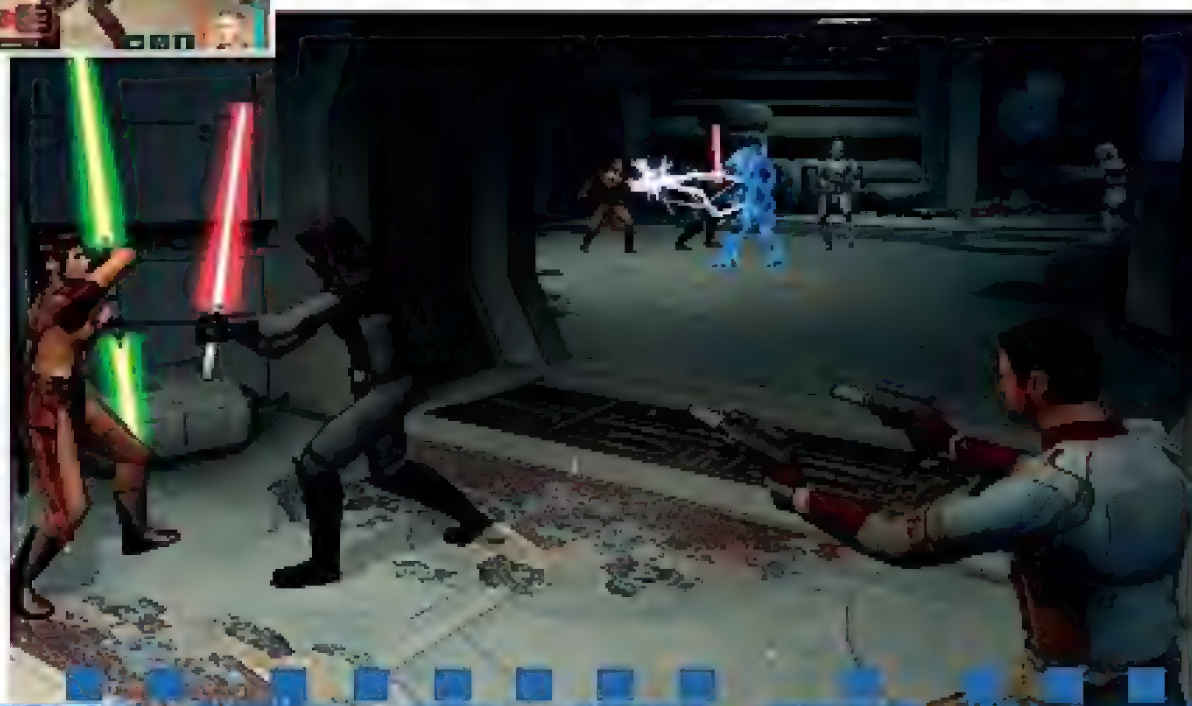
Obsidian Entertainment developed *KotOR II—The Sith Lords* (2004), boasting the same sort of excellent writing and characters seen in the first game. The overall experience, however, suffered from content cut late in project development. Dedicated fans worked to restore some of this lost content from files found in the PC release of the game.



Above, right: The box art for *Knights of the Old Republic* (2003). The movie poster style reflects the cinematic nature of the game.

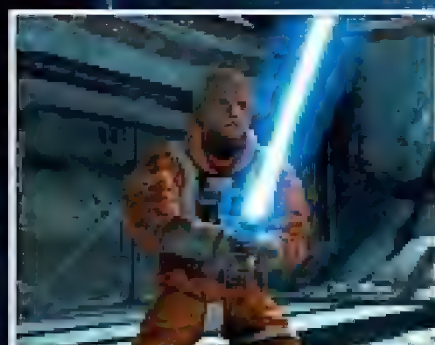
Above, and right: Jedi in action in *Knights of the Old Republic* (2003).

Opposite page: Main image: *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II* (2010) box art. Right: Taking on Kenobi, Left: Luke Skywalker prepares to fight.



ANTI-HERO UNLEASHED

Set between the events of Episodes III and IV, *The Force Unleashed* (2009) told the tale of Darth Vader's secret apprentice: Starkiller (after George Lucas' original name for Skywalker). Haden Blackman led an ambitious project in his vision of an over-the-top, Force-wielding superhero. The game's complex physics systems realistically modeled shattering carbonite, rubbery plant life, and the flailing Stormtroopers in Starkiller's path of destruction. Top-quality actors brought the award-winning story to life as ILM's motion-capture equipment recorded every subtle movement for their digital simulacra. The plot also had plenty of twists and turns. *The Force Unleashed II* (2010) made refinements to gameplay as the story propelled to an intriguing cliffhanger. Inspired by the *Infinites* series of comic books, several downloadable levels explored how the original trilogy would play out if Starkiller had killed and replaced Vader before the events of *A New Hope*. Players also had the chance to battle classic *Star Wars* characters such as Boba Fett, Luke Skywalker, and Obi-Wan Kenobi—whose spirit returns to haunt Starkiller in a dramatic face-off!





A LONG, LONG, LONG, LONG TIME AGO.....

BioWare returned to the KotOR era in a big way with the release of *The Old Republic* (2011). For the first time, its detailed style of storytelling combined with a massively multiplayer online game. Each character class has a carefully crafted story arc, the first chapter of which was longer than the entirety of KotOR. All told, TOR took over sixty man-years worth of writing to create and continued to grow as the game developed.

All in all, the *Star Wars* saga has an impressive history, unparalleled by any other movie franchise and with few peers in the games world. Even so, there can be no doubt that the best is yet to come... Here's to the next 30 years!

BEYOND THE JOYPAD

The heroes and villains we meet in *Star Wars* videogames aren't always one offs. Sometimes they take on a whole new life after their initial appearance. Here are five breakout stars!



1. Kyle Katarn

First appearance: *Dark Forces*

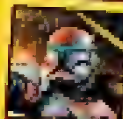
Also seen in: Numerous comics and novels including: *Allies*, *Vortex*, *Conviction*, *Ascension*, and *Apocalypse*.



2. Darth Malak

First appearance: *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*

Also seen in: *Star Wars: The Old Republic: Revan*



3. Delta Squad

First appearance: *Republic Commandos*

Also seen in: *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* "Witches of the Mist."



4. Dash Rendar

First appearance: *Shadows of the Empire*

Also seen in: *Shadow Games*



5. Dark Troopers

First Appearance *Dark Forces*

Also seen in: *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Star Wars Battlefront* series



GUEST STARS

Star Wars characters and vehicles appear in many non-Star Wars games, often as secret bonus characters. In Lucasfilm Games' *Night Shift* (1990), players operated a cantankerous toy-making machine producing cute dolls of Star Wars characters: "Baby Vader," "Little Luke Skywalker," "Obi-Wan Jr.," "Mini-R2-D2," "C-15PD," and "Stormtrooper Toddler." The game's fictitious toy company, Industrial Might & Logic, was a parody of the Lucas visual effect facility, Industrial Light & Magic.



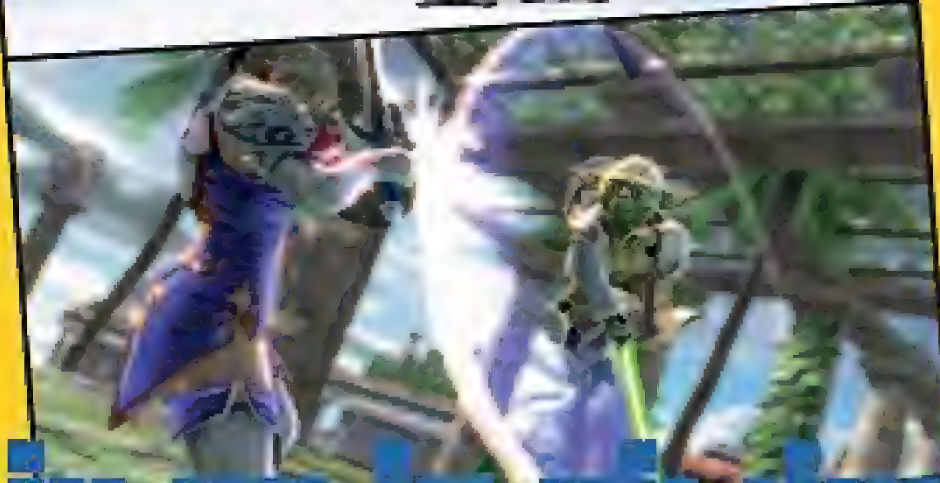
LucasArts' WWII dogfighting game *Secret Weapons over Normandy* (2003) hid a few secret weapons for pilots who completed the game: playable X-wing and TIE fighter aircraft.

The award for most out-of-universe game cameos goes to Han Solo, a secret playable character in three different games: *Mercenaries: Playground of Destruction* (2005), *LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures* (2008), and *Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings* (2009). Darth Maul and Jango Fett grind the rails in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* and *4* (2001, 2002), respectively, with custom tracks like the Sith Saber Spin and Jango Jump Jet.

Nintendo's mind-reading controller? *Shadows of the Empire* (1996), one of the first games released for Nintendo's N64 game system, opened with what is still widely regarded as the best re-creation of the Battle of Hoth. The N64's analog joystick enabled subtle flight control for winding tow cables around walker legs, the 3D graphics hardware effortlessly rendered the expansive battle scene, and Lucasfilm's topnotch sound and music completed the experience.

Working with bleeding-edge game technology is never easy: The team waited 18 long months for Nintendo to finalize the hardware and worked under extreme secrecy. The prototype controller, a Super Nintendo gamepad modified with an analog joystick, stayed hidden from prying eyes in a cardboard box. Onlookers asked, "What's in the box?" when developers reached inside to play the game. They joked that the controller was covered with an experimental ooze that absorbed the player's thoughts through their fingertips, but only while thinking in Japanese!

Darth Vader, Yoda, and Starkiller from *The Force Unleashed* sliced their way into *SoulCalibur IV*'s (2008) fighting arenas.



MY STAR WARS

SUAVE, COOL, AND CHARMING, **BILLY DEE WILLIAMS** (THE "DEE" PART STANDS FOR "DECEMBER") IS MUCH LIKE HIS ON-SCREEN COUNTERPART, LANDO CALRISSIAN. *INSIDER* MET THE MAN HIMSELF TO DISCUSS ART, BETRAYAL, AND BUFFING UP! **INTERVIEW BY MARK NEWBOLD & JAMES BURNS**

When did you first become aware of Star Wars?
I saw the first film and was amazed! It was such a thrill ride. George is such a visionary. I knew of his work before Star Wars and I really wanted to work with him. I'm glad the chance came along with Empire.

Where is the strangest place you've been recognized?

I get approached almost everywhere I go. I am very pleased to meet fans, and I will always put down my dinner fork to say hi. Without the fans, I would not be where I am today. That is why I like going to conventions: I get to give back to the fans.

Can you reveal something about yourself that will surprise your fans?

Some people have no idea that I was an artist before I was an actor. My art is very important to me.

Do you have a favorite scene?
I loved going up against Darth Vader in Empire. It might have only been for a second, but I did stand up to him!



Do you have a favorite Star Wars toy? I like how buff they made me when the new line of action figures came out! I've never had that many muscles. But I do like what Hasbro has done with all of their line.

What is your favorite Star Wars film? Empire is my favorite. Our director, Irvin Kershner (below, left), did such a great job with it. It was such a unique experience to be part of. I still remember having to defend Lando when I would drop my daughter off at school. Lando had to give Han to the bounty hunter! He had no choice.



EXPANDED

See Billy Dee Williams' art at www.bdwworldart.com and follow him on twitter @realbdw

UNIVERSE

MARSHALLING THE TROOPS!



WHEN THE CREDITS ROLL AFTER EACH EPISODE OF *STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS*, IT'S A SIGN THAT LINE PRODUCER ATHENA PORTILLO HAS SUCCESSFULLY ORGANIZED THE PRODUCTION TEAM INTO CREATING ANOTHER GREAT SHOW.

INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN WILKINS

Star Wars Insider: Can you describe your role on *The Clone Wars*?
Athena Portillo: In a nutshell, I make sure we hit all our deadlines on a weekly basis. I create the master schedule for the show alongside Cary Silver, the producer. I also work closely with Cary on the budget of the show and with Dave Filoni in making sure that his plans are executed.

What are the biggest challenges?
Right now we work with animation studios in Singapore, Tokyo, Taipei, Shanghai, Vietnam, and our own studio here in San Francisco. There's always, I'd say, a season's worth of episodes that are being made in different stages.

For example, some episodes are at script phase, some are in design, some are in assets (creating the elements that make up the episode), some are in 3D story (essentially a 3D storyboard), and then the rest are in animation, cloth effects, lighting, or in revisions provided by George Lucas and Dave during the re-take phase. So I'm trying to keep track of where every episode is and in what phase. It's multitask-orientated to the point that all that's in my mind is *The Clone Wars* at any given time.

What are the pitfalls of making a show like *The Clone Wars*?
The Clone Wars is pretty much movie quality, but it's movie quality within a short amount of time on a lower budget. All our episodes are arc-based, so we do three to four episodes and that pretty much constitutes a movie in terms of footage. It's a challenge trying to get the show to look the way it looks, but it's made easier because we have amazing staff such as Joel Aron, who's our CG supervisor—lighting and effects—and Keith Kellogg, who's our animation supervisor. Dave Filoni's vision is amazing.

What are your tricks and tips for keeping the show on budget?
We pretty much have our own system down. We establish parameters with the overseas studios in terms of animation, cost, and effects, and there's an allotted amount of man-hours that are allocated to the studios and we keep it within budget. Obviously, Joel and Keith know that, so when we're in dailies looking at the shots, we make sure that we're not asking for too many retakes, that we're not demanding cloth

simulation that's too complicated, even down to the design phase when we're looking at character design. We make adjustments before the design gets approved because we understand the capacity at the studios. We pretty much do that from the very beginning, even at the script phase, in making sure that there aren't too many characters, vehicles, or props that are called out.

If you watch the first season, it looks great, but if you watch the current season, it looks amazing! What's it been like seeing the show evolve from the inside?

It's been great. In the first season, we were still figuring out what would look great on screen. We had pretty tight parameters as well, but as we moved forward, all our main characters now have different face shapes that allow you to enote different vowels or such when they're speaking. Our main characters are a little bit more sophisticated. It's the same thing with cloth simulation. They work so hard to get the cloth rigs to the point where movement is just fluid and smooth, and that takes time and practice. Same thing with cycles: some studios utilize different kinds of software (continued on page 27)





FAVORITE EPISODE OF THE CLONE WARS?

Athena: "Oh my gosh! All the episodic directors would kill me if I didn't pick theirs. I love all the episodes that have Darth Maul in them. Darth Maul rocks and I'm glad that he's back."

Above, left: Athena in her Princess Leia outfit, ready to organize the Rebels at Lucasfilm Animation! Photo by Joel Aron

Left: Athena's glad to see the return of Darth Maul, the Jedi-killin'.



C-3PO OR R2-D2?

Athena: "I love R2-D2 because he's always there to save the day. Any moment you think he's fallen off the cliff or something, his boosters start up and he's there. He's also a little sarcastic: in some of the episodes when someone's talking to him, he's beeping all these sarcastic remarks and you know exactly what he's saying! I think he's pretty smart."



FAVORITE STAR WARS MOVIE?

Athena: *The Empire Strikes Back*: absolutely, hands down! I remember being in line for two hours at the Coronet on Geary Street (in San Francisco) to watch *The Empire Strikes Back* with my sister and my dad. I remember the souvenir booklet being sold—they were coming up to everyone in line asking if we wanted to buy one—and I remember telling my dad, "I want that!" On the cover it was Han and Leia in Hoth with a tauntaun on the right side of the cover and I was just like "Wow!" It was funny because when we watched *The Empire Strikes Back*, I developed my first crush on Luke Skywalker while my sister developed her crush on Han Solo. I was like, "Why him? Can't you see he's sarcastic and not very nice?" and she was like, "What? He's charming! Why do you like Luke? He's always whining!" I mentioned the whole Dagobah scene to her and how he was developing his Jedi skills and would become strong with the Force (right) and she was like, "Yeah, you'll change your mind when you're older."

CHOICES!

Favorite Clone Wars characters?

Athena: "You're going to laugh because I like the Nightbrothers, the Nightsisters, and I like the Twi'leks. I remember saying something to Filoni in passing along the lines of, 'If I was a Nightsister I would totally date a Nightbrother—just as long as we're not related, though!'"

Far left: The Nightbrothers: Athena's ideal date!

Far left: "Water War" proved to be a challenging episode to complete.

Left: The ever-popular Nightsisters!

so we're able to provide more samples for background characters and get more characters into the scenes.

George Lucas is known sometimes for changing or improving things. Does he ever say, "Let's go back and change some episodes?"

It has happened and we make it happen. There was the Geonosis arc where we were pretty much finished with the entire string of episodes. I think we got the most notes in the 3D story phase where we had to rewrite the script and then go back to redoing the entire 3D story layout for it. Also, when we're in full color, George will ask for new shots and dialogue changes—sometimes even new

could become complicated if you don't have a team that's just willing to make it work.

What was the specific challenge with the Nightsisters episodes? It was the effects, the look of the show, the number of characters that we had—especially in the show that had all the zombies. We had to go through all the different cycles to make sure they looked like they were dead people walking or running. There's just a lot of work that goes into making it, so we try to think of these things months and months ahead of time. We start discussing how we're going to rig plants that are supposed to be moving in an entire environment;

"I HAVEN'T COME ACROSS THE IMPOSSIBLE, BECAUSE WHENEVER WE'RE THROWN A CHALLENGE, WE ALWAYS SAY WE'LL MAKE IT WORK."

assets, which means we have to go back to design phase. We always make it work, and everybody on the team is always in agreement—that it always looks better. George's notes always make the show look better; he's a genius and it's amazing to hear what his thought process is.

Is there anything that isn't possible?

I haven't come across the impossible, because whenever we're thrown a challenge, we always say we'll make it work. That's what's so great about this team. The challenges were with "Water War" and the Nightsisters episodes. There are just so many environments, and areas that

whether the sky is red all the time or cloudy. We ask what kind of movements are we trying to get out of this? What kind of face shape is required? Is the hair supposed to be simmed? All of that gets discussed up front, so that we don't end up in a situation where it's like, "We only have a limited time to animate this! How are we going to get this done?"


So at this moment in time, what are you working on? We're trying to wrap up Season Five in terms of animation, lighting, the rest of the episodes, and we're working on future seasons; and I know the Season Four DVD is in progress right now. We're doing all of that at the moment—and it's exciting!

What is the biggest misconception people have about the show?

That it's easy to make. It takes a lot of hard work and we always have to be ready for challenges, for any revisions that are requested of us. It's all hands on deck: we're ready, we're willing, we're happy, we're excited, but it's a challenge. All the arcs have new stories, which makes it exciting, but also a lot of hard work and an awful lot of fun. 🍌

Look up,
America. Look
down. We're
in trouble.



The background of the entire page is a dynamic space battle scene. In the upper left, a white X-wing fighter is shown from a high angle, banking sharply. In the lower left, a larger, more complex Imperial starship, possibly a Star Destroyer or a similar capital ship, is partially visible, angled towards the viewer. The central focus is the large, bold title 'ATTACK POSITIONS!'. The background is filled with blue and white light effects, suggesting explosions, laser fire, or the intense atmosphere of a dogfight in space.

STAR WARS INSIDER CHATS
WITH AUTHOR AARON
ALLSTON ABOUT HIS NEW
X-WING NOVEL, *MERCY KILL*.
FEATURE BY TRICIA BARR

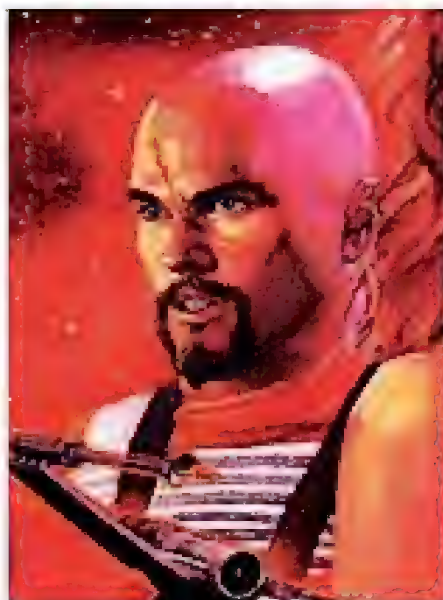
ATTACK POSITIONS!

The image of X-wing fighters approaching the Death Star in *Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope* is a truly iconic one—it defined the overwhelming odds faced by lone individuals taking on the oppressive might of the Empire. The X-Wing novel series explores the triumphs and tragedies of pilots brave enough to take a stand, and *Mercy Kill* continues that tradition, showcasing the struggles of regular folk. *Star Wars Insider* talked with author Aaron Allston about the characters, mayhem, and legacies that make the series so special to fans.

Main Image:
The X-wings in
battle; one of
Star Wars' most
enduring images.
Cover Image for
the novel *Star
Wars: X-Wings*.
Two X-wings
by Michael A.
Blackwood.
Art by Paul Van
Dyke.

Right: Star
"Pace" from
left by
Thompson
Magnum.





Star Wars Insider: The last X-Wing novel, *Starfighters of Adumar*, was released in 1999. Can you tell us how the idea came about to revisit the series?

Aaron Allston: I'm embarrassed to say that I can't. Throughout these 13 years, X-Wing fans have regularly asked me when a new novel might come out, and I assume they've been asking the same of Del Rey. But when my editor, Shelly Shapiro, asked me about continuing the series, which happened early in 2010, it came out of the blue. I was just happy that they asked—I wasn't going to look a gift tauntaun in the mouth!

Mercy Kill spins off events in the Fate of the Jedi series. Do fans need to have read that series or the previous Wraith Squadron books to understand the storyline or who the players are? I don't believe so. Some of my advance readers hadn't read the Fate of the Jedi or Legacy of the Force series. For several of them, it had been more than a decade since they'd read the X-Wing novels. But everyone seemed to be able to pick up all the relevant backstory from context in *Mercy Kill*.

Previous X-Wing books focused on individual operations within broader galactic-level struggles for power. Does *Mercy Kill* follow this formula, too?

Yes, I'd say so. Though the galaxy-spanning events of the Fate of the Jedi series are over, there are loose ends still remaining—and in *Mercy Kill*, the Wraiths have to deal with one of the most important of them. But because it's an Intelligence-style mission, their methods of dealing with the trouble are more surgical, on a smaller scale, so the novel may have a more intimate feel for some readers.

Why do you think the X-Wing series is so popular with Expanded Universe fans, even though the Jedi and the Force play a very small role in the stories?

I'm not sure "even though" is the right way to express it. Some fans appreciate the X-Wing series precisely because the Jedi and the Force play a reduced role. These readers like to be reminded that characters who aren't superheroes have an important role to play in the galaxy far, far away.

Garik "Face" Loran, who commanded Wraith Squadron during the Yuuzhan Vong war, returns in a leadership role. What makes his character so compelling? I'm guessing that it's the way he confronts

life. Before the first Wraith novel, he realized that Palpatine's Empire was an evil thing and Face's career as a holodrama actor was benefitting it, so he basically threw away that life of privilege to do what he thought was right. He forged a friendship with Tan Phanan, and then, when Phanan died,

Face didn't become a self-pitying wreck—he grieved, then he moved on. He copes, he adapts, all in a normal human fashion, without a lot of personal drama or self-aggrandizement, and readers seem to appreciate that.

In *Mercy Kill*, we see logical continuations of Face's personal growth. We see bits of his family life. We see the way he has become an effective, even ruthless, Intelligence officer—and yet remains Face Loran.

We can't talk about the series without mentioning Wedge Antilles, who brought both Rogue Squadron and Wraith Squadron to legendary status. Why did you pick his daughter Myri to continue the family legacy?

Well, both his daughters have taken up family trades—Syal as a pilot and Myri chiefly as an Intelligence-style operative.

**"CHARACTERS WHO
AREN'T SUPERHEROES
HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE
TO PLAY IN THE GALAXY
FAR, FAR AWAY."**

I tend to think that as the *Star Wars* timeline marches through the decades, the stories ought to be more about generationality, and in *Mercy Kill*, Jesmin, Wran, and Myri point to that generationality, just as Ben [Skywalker], Jaina [Solo], Jag [Fett], and Allana [Solo] do in the more mainline series.

They have a lot to live up to. Do you think that makes it harder for these new Wraiths? Some yes, some no. Jesmin's parents, both former Wraiths, are well-respected practitioners of their respective professions but aren't famous galaxy-wide, so Jesmin has found it easier to establish her own identity. But Myri Antilles—her father is a legend, so she'll tend to have a lot more to live up to.

Myri and Jesmin not only represent the next generation, but also an important theme of *Star Wars*—friendship. Was it easier to create this bond having written about their parents?

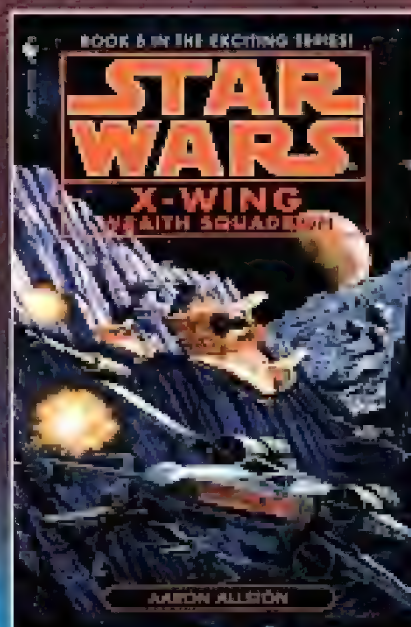
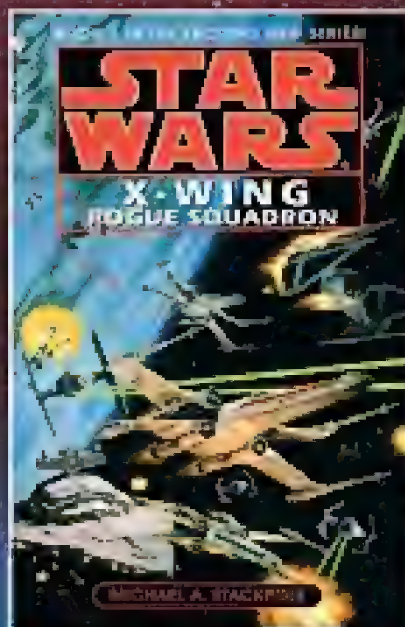
Certainly, in the sense that having written about, and therefore knowing, the parents makes it easier to have a sense of the children and how they might interact. But, really, in today's fiction, knowing the characters as thoroughly as possible is key to everything—plotting, dialogue, action, everything.

"MYRI ANTILLES' FATHER (WEDGE) IS A LEGEND, SO SHE'LL HAVE A LOT MORE TO LIVE UP TO."

Voort "Piggy" saBinring is a genetically-enhanced Gamorrean who bridges the gap between the old and the new Wraiths. What made his character well suited for exploring the theme of the ramifications of war on the individual?

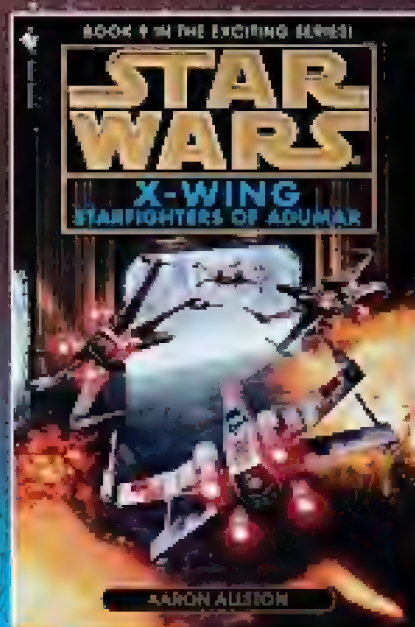
Piggy's special because he's the ultimate outsider, not well embraced either by Gamorreans or by other species. The fact that he was a veteran of the Yuuzhan Vong war and other conflicts didn't earn him a lot of slack with people, so he pretty much had to lick his wartime wounds all on his own.

(Continued on page 26)



Above, from left: The book that started it all, *Rogue Squadron* and two subsequent titles, *Wraith Squadron* and *Starfighters of Adumar*!

Main image: Wedge Antilles, *Rogue Squadron* founder member and hero of the Rebellion! Art by Dave Dorman.



THE HISTORY OF THE X-WING SERIES

In the Original Trilogy, the X-wing is the distinctive starfighter of the Rebel Alliance. After Episode IV, Luke Skywalker and his wingman Wedge Antilles, the two survivors of Red Squadron's attack on the first Death Star, formed what became the iconic Rogue Squadron. When Luke's destiny took him down the path of the Jedi, command of the Rogues fell to Wedge, who led the pilots through an action-packed set of adventures.

In the mid-1990s, LucasArts released a series of X-Wing videogames, giving players the chance to experience the thrill of starfighter combat. The commercial success of the games inspired other licensees to capitalize on its popularity. From 1995-98, Dark Horse Comics released a 35-issue series, *X-Wing: Rogue Squadron*, written primarily by Michael A. Stackpole.

Barren published Stackpole's novel *X-Wing: Rogue Squadron* in 1994. The first Expanded Universe novel not to rely upon Luke, Han, or Leia, some of the pilots had been background players in the movies (think, "Great shot, Janson!"), while others were completely new characters, including Corran Horn and a diverse list of squadron-mates. Three more *Rogue Squadron* novels followed over the next year, spinning suspenseful adventures around the squadron's efforts to take down Ysanne Isard, claimant to control of Imperial forces still pushing to defeat the New Republic. With Stackpole committed to writing a solo novel for Corran, the first-person narrative *I, Jedi*, the baton was passed to Aaron Allston, a fellow veteran of the game design industry.

X-Wing: Wrath Squadron introduced a new merry band of pilots—previous washouts and misfits drawn together by Wedge into a covert operations task force capable of executing clandestine missions behind enemy lines. Allston wrote two more *Wrath* books, recounting the squadron's moves against warlords causing havoc for the New Republic. In 1999, Stackpole returned with *X-Wing: Isard's Revenge* and *Rogue Squadron's* final victory over their Imperial nemesis, while Allston wrote *X-Wing: Starfighters of Adumar*, a standalone novel featuring Wedge and a small group of friends on a diplomatic mission for the New Republic that still ranks as an all-time fan favorite.

The X-Wing novel series came to an end when the New Jedi Order saga and the Prequel Trilogy era novels filled Del Rey's publishing schedule, but many of the Rogues, *Wraths*, and their family members have remained key players in the ongoing post-*Return of the Jedi* timeline. One of Wedge's original *Wrath Squadron* recruits, Garik "Face" Lorari, commanded the unit during the Yuuzhan Vong war, including leading a daring infiltration of the captured Coruscant alongside Luke Skywalker and a team of Jedi.

Since 1999, fans have been asking when the next X-Wing book would be released. At Celebration V in Orlando, Del Rey finally granted their wish, announcing that Allston would be writing a new *Wrath Squadron* novel, *X-Wing: Mercy Kill* goes on sale August 7, 2012.



The X-wings of Rogue Leader Wedge Antilles and the pilots of Rogue Squadron take flight. Painting by Simon Ståhl from the *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* comic book.

And he's someone who has never really had a family. The Wraiths were his family, and the idea of him distancing himself from them because of a tragedy, then being dragged back into the company of a new generation of them, lent itself very well to the novel's theme of renewal, of personal rebirth.

In your New Jedi Order books, *Rebel Dream* and *Rebel Stand*, the Wraiths used the Yuuzhan Vong's own expertise in biofabrication to their advantage. Now they've added a Yuuzhan Vong to the roster. How does working with the former enemy play into the story? It introduces several dynamics. I actually didn't want to rely on the traditional "he's from an enemy culture so we must be suspicious of him" cliché—only Voort, the surviving Wraith with the most Yuuzhan Vong experience, has those feelings. But

"I DON'T WANT TO SEE ALL RODIANS AS JUMPY SMUGGLERS, ALL FALLEEN AS MANIPULATIVE MASTERMINDS..."

having a Yuuzhan Vong character gives me an outsider's perspective on the Wraiths and the universe, plus it allows me to demonstrate yet another way that individuals from alien cultures can defy expectations. I don't want to see all Rodians as jumpy smugglers, all Falleen as manipulative masterminds, or all Yuuzhan Vong as fanatical cultural purists.

The Wraiths battle an opponent in this book—the Pop-Dogs—who aren't cut-and-dried as enemies of the Galactic Alliance. Why did you take this approach? Younger readers in particular like bad guys who are unambiguously evil. But if you go that route, you're writing something with the ethical complexity of a low-end video game. When some opponents are on the wrong side through no fault of their own, the protagonists have to come up with crystal-clear reasons for their own involvement and with the best



available tactics—because anything else would get innocents killed.

It's impossible to read this book without cracking a smile. How do you mesh humor with the tougher issues you are trying to tackle?

The thing to remember, which some people don't get, is that I don't write comedy; I write humor.

Humor is basically anything that intentionally evokes a laugh, but comedy is something else entirely—in its pursuit of the laugh, it imposes very specific genre rules on and offers special licenses to the story. For instance, a guy taking a three-story fall in a comedy lands in a big pile of manure because some people find a character wallowing in dung to be funny. A guy taking a three-story fall in one of my novels suffers broken bones and pain, if not worse, because that's the way gravity works—so it isn't there that the story

evokes humor. That's the wrong place for it.

So when it's humor you're dealing with, not comedy, you can more easily get at honest emotions and realistic issues of pain, personal growth, tragedy, and so forth, and yet they won't be in conflict with the humor.

While you're not writing comedy, some of the former Wraiths seem to think they're comedians. Should fans expect more Wraith hijinks?

Most of the humor they experience will be in dialogue, but, yes, the Wraiths do love to mess with one another, and you'll run across some physical comedy touches. Some traditions must be upheld, after all. ☺

EXPANDED

Mercy Kill by Aaron Allston
is out now!

UNIVERSE

ROGUES GALLERY

THE EWOKS:

WHO'S WHO IN BRIGHT TREE VILLAGE, BY LELAND Y. CHEE.



01: WUTA

02: WISPETH

05: GREEMON

06: LAKOTUP

07: WIFUNEE

11: BRETHUPP

12: FUFUNEEK

13: WAROK

WARRIORS OF ENDOR!



03: TOKKAT

04: LEEKTAR

08: WIDDLE "WILLY"
WARRICK

09: BARNEESON

10: TARAS

14: LUMAT

15: KHUNGATA

16: ROMBA



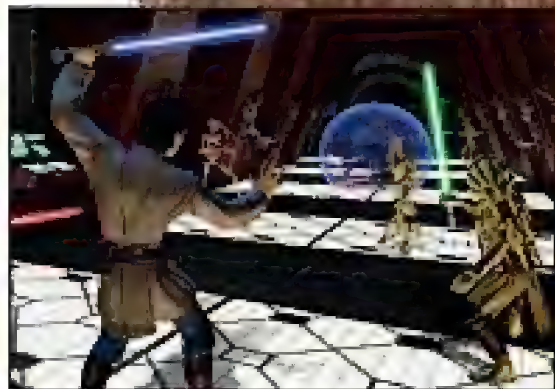
TAKING

CONTROL

A hand holding a blaster points towards the golden droid C-3PO and the astromech R2-D2 in a desert landscape. The scene is framed by a pixelated border. A bright blue light beam cuts across the top of the image.

HOW TAKING UP A LIGHTSABER, RAMPAGING THROUGH TATOOINE, AND DANCING WITH THE STARS (OF *STAR WARS*) MADE THE LATEST *STAR WARS* VIDEOGAME A HIT! WORDS: TONY A. ROWE

Hinect *Star Wars*—a collaboration between LucasArts, Terminal Reality, Good Science and Microsoft Studios—puts you in the action of the *Star Wars* galaxy like no other game before. With five game modes, players young and old use their bodies to duel with lightsabers, use the Force, crush cities as a rancor monster, pilot Podracers, and dance like Dela in Jabba's throne room. *Insider* spoke with the creators at LucasArts for a behind-the-scenes look at the game.



YOU ARE A JEDI

The game opens as the player steps into the Jedi Archives, assisted by R2-D2 and C-3PO. Art director Hez Chorbá explains, "These droids guide you and you are the Jedi. You end up walking through the universe as a character, and that matches what the Kinect brand is." The droids act as a central, connective hub to tie together the various game modes. "We set these key components and they helped guide us through everything we did in the game design. It was something planned for, but we didn't realize how beneficial it would be in the end." The droids' banter and antics provide plenty of humor while navigating menus. "These are my two favorite characters. They are our Laurel & Hardy."

Numerous studios built the game as a collaborative effort and it was up to Chorbá to direct several developers with a single artistic vision. "I was constantly online with the artists, reviewing characters, environments, and props, making sure that the look and the feel always stayed on the brand style we developed."

They needed a massive amount of reference material for the task. "We had six five-inch [12.5 cm] thick binders of characters that we could flip through quickly and see where we were at on design. We had it all online as well, but seeing it all at once was often easier."

Main image:
Rancor smash!
The beast
unleashed.

Above left: Using
the Force to take
down the hapless
battle droids.

Above right: Jedi
vs. MagnaGuard.
Who'll be the
first to lose
his head?



JEDI DESTINY

In *Jedi Destiny* game mode, one or two players move, fight, and use the Force as a Padawan learner undergoing their first missions. Leading the way is Jedi Master Mavra Zane, voiced by veteran actress Jennifer Hale. Gamers may recognize Hale from her work as Bastila in *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*, Commander Shepard in *Mass Effect*, as well as providing the voices of Aayla Secura and Senator Chuchi in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. Music supervisor Jesse Harlin recalls, "She was a lot of fun to work with." Nolan North, the voice of Nathan Drake in the *Uncharted* game series, lends his talents to Mak Pra, described by Harlin as, "a smuggler-esque, rebellious kind of guy, but he's got this swagger to him. He's a cool character." Lead producer Craig Derrick agrees, "These characters could live on in other media. We even talked about getting action figures made."

Players wreak chaos and destruction as a giant monster in *Rampage*

Rampage mode. Derrick states, "That's my favorite mode in the game. It's really goofy and fun. What you do in the living room has an immediate translation on screen."

"One of the great things about Kinect with a mode like this is the use of *Avateering*, a term Microsoft coined that derives from puppeteering. Your body in the living room controls everything in a 1:1 motion to the avatar on screen. You feel connected to the game in a way that sitting on a couch with a game controller cannot provide."

"The games that inspired us the most were the *LEGO Star Wars* games," Derrick adds, "in that there is collection and there is destruction. Kids like to play and break their toys, and nothing fits the destruction aspect better than a giant rancor monster. We knew the physicality of the mode was high, so we limited the length of time that you play."

Once we had a two to three-minute time limit combined with simple goals, it started feeling like an arcade game.



As we started thinking of arcade games that mirror this, the original *Rampage* came up." A classic arcade game, *Rampage* cast players as giant monsters working to destroy a city. The game mode is a great fit for the Kinect peripheral, but was not one of the team's first designs.

"The concept pitch stated that the game would have lightsabers, Force powers, racing, speeder bikes, space battles, dancing, and shoot-out galleries. It never had *Rancor Rampage*. *Rancor* came in a little bit later."

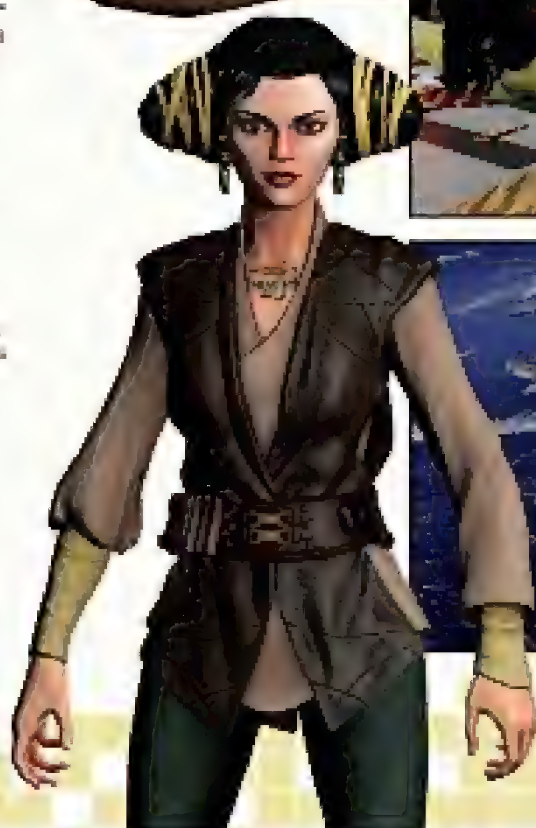


Top right: Theed gets a pasting!

Right: Jedi Master Mavra Zane.

Far right: The Jedi team up to defeat a Trandoshan.

Below, right: Immersive, epic space combat as only *Star Wars* can do.



NOW THIS IS PODRACING!

Podracing mode puts players in the seat of a jet-powered Podracer in the Boonta Eve Classic. Derrick states, "As you think of other fun *Star Wars* experiences that translate well to Kinect, Podracing comes to mind. We looked at arcade games for inspiration and *Star Wars Racer Arcade* was up there on the list. When you break it down further, the physicality, the movement of your arms to control a Podracer, you can do that with Kinect really well. It adds something that other Kinect racing games don't have."

Kinect *Star Wars* joins a long list of great Podracing games but, "we didn't just want to make a sequel to Episode I Racer or Racer Revenge. The idea we came up with was: Where is Watto today, 10 years after Episode I? We saw him down on his luck in Episode II. Could we inject you, the player, into a story that is ultimately about Watto's redemption? That led to us bringing back the original actors to portray the voices of Watto (Andy Secombel), Sebulba (Lewis MacLeod), and even Fode (comedian Greg Proops) as the race commentator. We put the player in a true sequel to Watto's story."

Players lock sabers and Force powers with villains from across the galaxy in the Duels of Fates game mode. Derrick and his team were influenced by the design of *Star Wars Trilogy Arcade*. "We looked at that a lot," he reveals. "At Microsoft Studios, they had the *Star Wars Racer Arcade* and the *Star Wars Trilogy Arcade* cabinets."

"Asking someone to stand in front of their TV and interact is challenging, but we grew up standing in front of game machines at the



Above right: Lando shows how it's done in the Galactic Dance Off!

Right, middle: Podracing around the galaxy takes players to a variety of worlds, including Felucia.

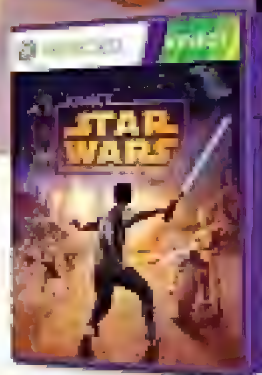
Right: Leia's doing "great"! Any less and that trap door's gonna open!





Above, right: Are your skills enough to take on Darth Vader?

Right: The special limited edition Xbox 360 features some very distinctive markings.



arcade. I think there was some element of physicality in certain arcade games, such as the *Star Wars Trilogy Arcade*: You not only moved the stick, but you instinctively moved to the right and left. Of course, the game didn't respond to you leaning, but that was you believing you were using a lightsaber."

Galactic Dance Off opens the dance floor to players with *Star Wars* parody versions of contemporary songs. Derrick says, "There are videos on YouTube of characters from the original trilogy dancing to contemporary songs. Disney's *Star Wars Weekends* have done this for years. Families and children laugh and have a good time because it's not taking itself very seriously."

Composer Jesse Harlin wrote all of the parody songs with lead writer Tony Elias, but not every song made it into the game. Harlin notes, "There were two tracks that ended up in the game unaltered. At one point, we had parody lyrics for them but it never netted out. The parody of Bruno Mars' 'Just the Way You Are' was all about Grand Moff Tarkin confronting Leia on the bridge of the Death Star, called, 'Just Stay Where You Are.' I had turned Kool & the Gang's 'Celebration' into 'Disintegration,' about the scene with the bounty hunters on Darth Vader's ship in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Making parodies with other peoples' music is not a smooth process. Sometimes you don't get the clearances you need. The unparodied versions of those songs went in the game."

VADER SINGS!

"There was also a recording session where my goal was to teach Matt Sloan, the voice of Darth Vader, how to sing 'YMCA' by the Village People [for the parody song 'Empire Today']," Harlin laughs. "I was teaching the Dark Lord of the Sith the right rhythm, the pitches, singing the song and him singing it back to me. That was a little weird."

Matt Sloan also voiced Darth Vader in *Soul Calibur IV*, the *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* series, and other games and TV commercials, but he was discovered for his own parody. "He is the star of the Chad Vader YouTube series. The people who work here are all fans of *Star Wars* and we laugh at fan parodies all the time. When we heard Matt's Chad Vader we thought, *This guy does an incredible Vader. We've been working with him ever since.*"

EXPANDED

Kinect *Star Wars* is available for the Xbox 360 now

UNIVERSE

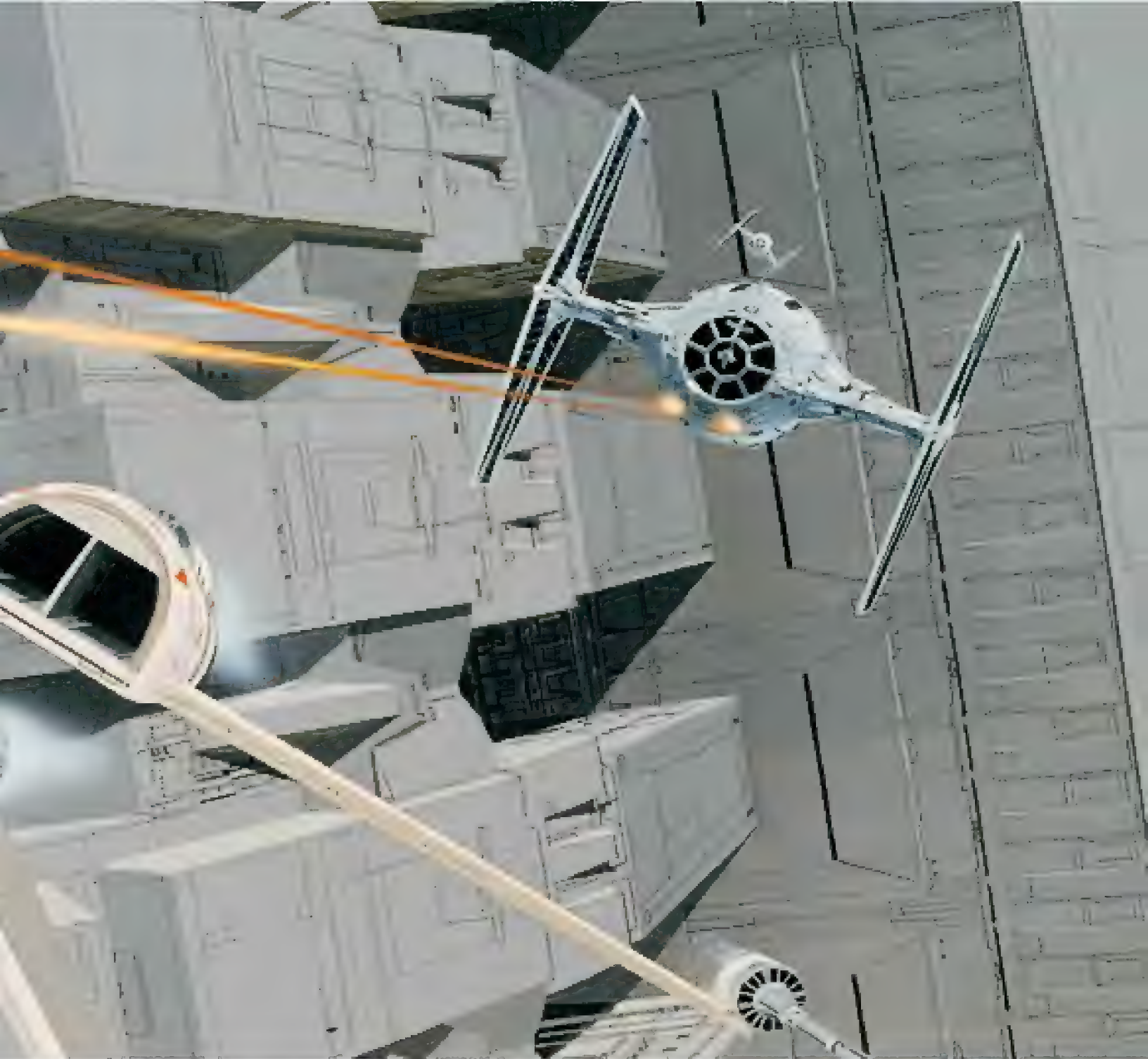
GRAND DESIGNS



Above: The battle over the surface of the Death Star, a production painting from the original *Star Wars*.

Right: Ralph McQuarrie at his desk inside the art department at Elstree Studios during the making of *The Empire Strikes Back*.

IN 1984, WHEN ILM GENERAL MANAGER THOMAS G. SMITH WAS RESEARCHING AND WRITING *INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC: THE ART OF SPECIAL EFFECTS*, HE INTERVIEWED SEVERAL KEY ILM-ERS, INCLUDING RALPH MCQUARRIE, WHO PASSED AWAY ON MARCH 3, 2012. SMITH HAS GENEROUSLY GIVEN THESE DECADES-OLD TAPES TO *INSIDER*, AS ONLY A FRACTION OF THEIR CONTENT MADE IT INTO THE ORIGINAL BOOK. OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL ISSUES *INSIDER* WILL PUBLISH THESE CINEMATICALLY HISTORIC CONVERSATIONS. **INTERVIEW BY THOMAS G. SMITH**



Star Wars Insider: How did you originally come to be interested in art?

Ralph McQuarrie: I started looking at paintings when I was a kid. My mother and grandfather painted and drew. My grandfather had this little publication he did and he was an important man in my hometown in Montana. I was interested in going to art class, before the age of 10. There was an art class at the polytechnic school [a school for teachers] in Billings. People would supervise classes of little kids to learn how to teach. I wasn't able to do that, but I was able to major in art before



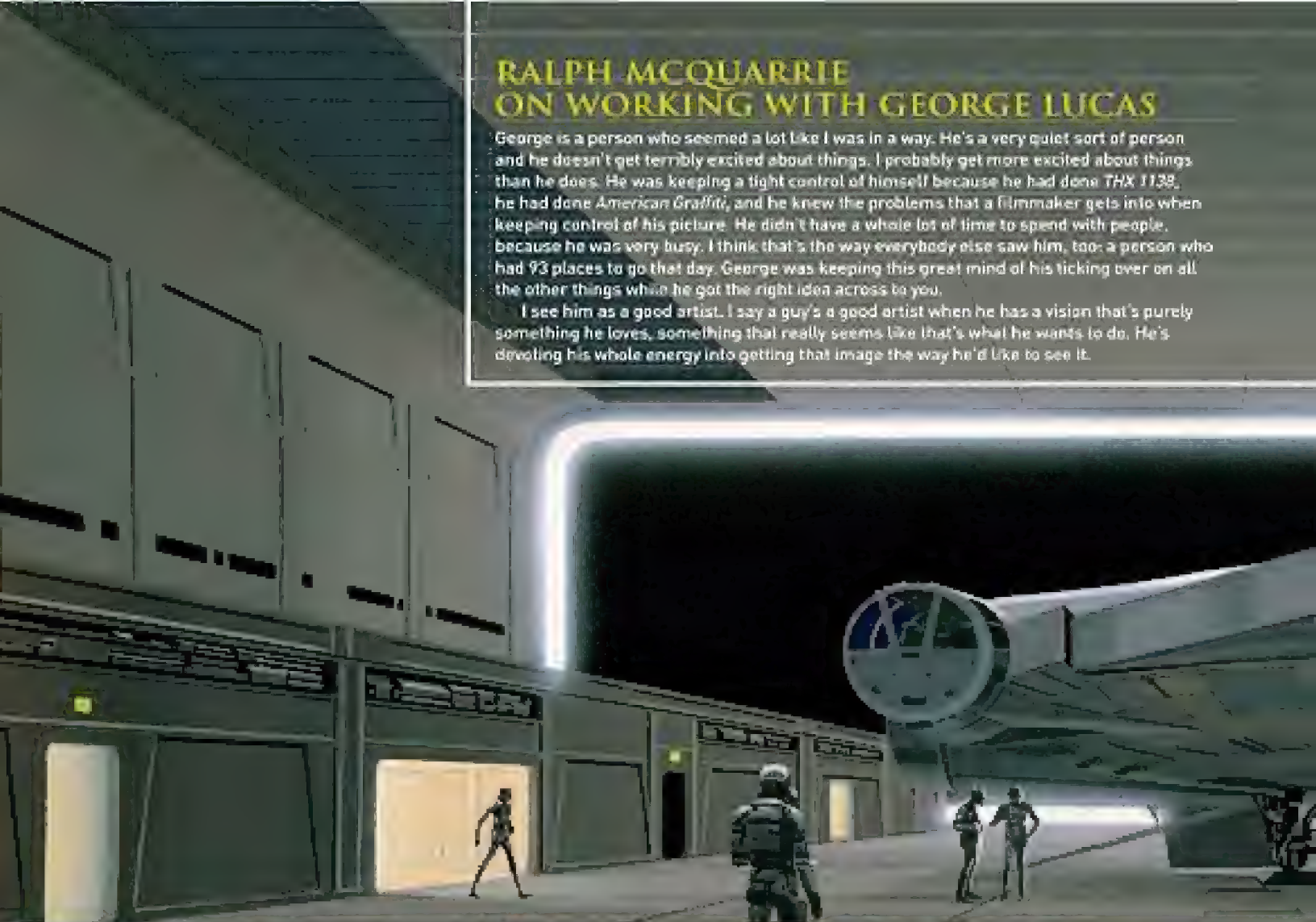
I left high school. I had pretty well settled on the idea of being a commercial artist before I left. I started working as a technical illustrator after a few months of instruction on isometric drawing at the YMCA technical school that was set up after World War II.

In 1949, I went into this school for technical illustrators and the instructor liked my drawings. I was doing quite a lot of drawings for myself and he suggested I become a painter. I hadn't had many art lessons, but I'd read books on painters and art, and I had a pretty good art-school teacher in high school talk to me quite a bit about the possibilities.

RALPH MCQUARRIE ON WORKING WITH GEORGE LUCAS

George is a person who seemed a lot like I was in a way. He's a very quiet sort of person and he doesn't get terribly excited about things. I probably get more excited about things than he does. He was keeping a tight control of himself because he had done *THX 1138*, he had done *American Graffiti*, and he knew the problems that a filmmaker gets into when keeping control of his picture. He didn't have a whole lot of time to spend with people, because he was very busy. I think that's the way everybody else saw him, too: a person who had 93 places to go that day. George was keeping this great mind of his ticking over on all the other things while he got the right idea across to you.

I see him as a good artist. I say a guy's a good artist when he has a vision that's purely something he loves, something that really seems like that's what he wants to do. He's devoting his whole energy into getting that image the way he'd like to see it.



Above:
The *Millennium Falcon* onboard the *Death Star*.

Above, right:
Legendary CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite visits ILM, speaking with McQuarrie as George Lucas looks on.

Right:
Ralph at work at Ektrene.

Far right:
The core team of the Empire matte painting department: Harrison Ellenshaw (standing, from left to right); Michael Pangrazio; Craig Barron; McQuarrie; and Neil Krepela.

I got a job at the Boeing Company in Seattle and started working as a technical illustrator. I was the youngest technical illustrator in the group of about 50 or so and we did repair manuals and parts catalogues. I worked there until sometime in 1950 when I was drafted and went into the Army during the Korean War. I spent two years in the Army—11 months of that was in Korea.

That must have been a pretty miserable place to be. I thought I was never going to get out of there alive. I got in so many close shaves. There were skirmishes, combat patrols, and a continual exchange of artillery and mortars. There were some fairly major actions that I was involved in, around about the end of the time that I was there, which resulted in a lot of casualties, including myself.

I got hit square up the side of the head with a round from a Russian "Burp Gun." If it had been an automatic, it would've killed me for sure because they spray out about 500 rounds a minute.

Luckily it hit my helmet and became caught up in the webbing. It slammed into





my head, went through the helmet, the steel, and pierced the liner.

I thought a grenade had gone off close to us, because I'd just seen a grenade rolling down the side of a hill. We were standing in a trench and the Chinese were on the other side of this hill, which was about 13 yards away. They were throwing grenades at us and we were throwing grenades at them. I was still standing there with this hand grenade; luckily I hadn't pulled the pin.

I wouldn't have known exactly what happened to me but for the fact that my helmet had a bullet hole in it. The medics didn't believe me. They didn't really believe what had happened: They looked at the side of my head and said, "Well, it could use a couple of stitches," and sent me back to hospital for a few days.

"GEORGE LUCAS
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It must have had a terrifying after-effect, too?

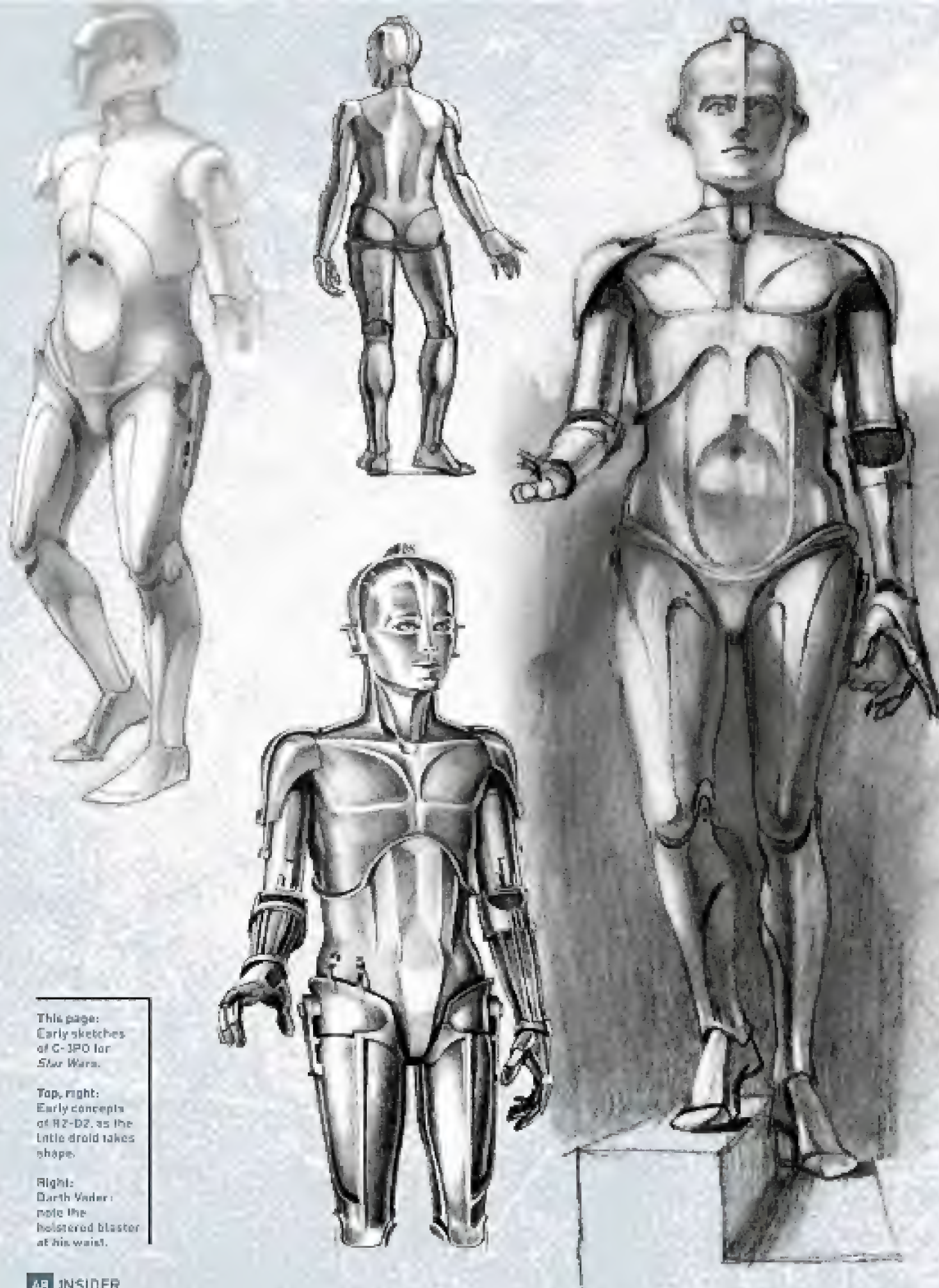
I heard later that a lot of people came back and said that they were embarrassed to be alive and that they felt very ashamed to be a survivor when so many people died that they knew well. That's the way I felt. I think underneath it was kind of subliminal. Coming back to my job was very hard for me and I just felt vaguely disturbed, for a long time. It made a lot of difference to my life, that's very true.

How did you first get approached to work on *Star Wars*?

I first met George Lucas in 1973 through producers Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins. They had a script they wanted to make into a film [*Star Dancing*] and they hadn't done anything with it yet. Their agent thought that an illustration would be good. They had seen some of my work and they knew a guy that I worked with at a place where we were doing stuff for the Apollo missions. So through them I met George one day—this was just about the time he was finishing *American Graffiti*. George saw my slides and we talked about *Star Wars*, even though it didn't even have a title yet.

George remembered me when he got around to approaching Fox. I think the ideas he had were very much from an illustrator's point of view. In other

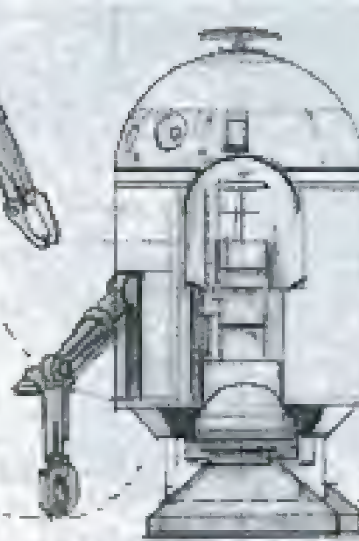
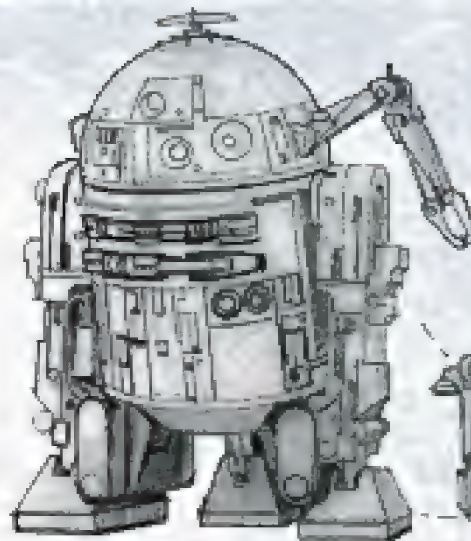




This page:
Early sketches
of C-3PO for
Star Wars.

Top, right:
Early concepts
of R2-D2, as the
little droid takes
shape.

Right:
Darth Vader:
note the
holstered blaster
at his waist.



words, the whole film was kind of motivated by this desire to see these things on the screen.

George and Gary Kurtz stopped by with a script. George had his second draft and left it with me. We sort of arranged right there in that 20-minute meeting what I was going to do. They wanted four or five paintings to take into Fox. So they said, "Just read it, find some things that you think are good to illustrate." So I had sketches and things for him the first time he came back. I had sketches of Artoo-Detoo and had started thinking about Darth Vader and See-Threepio.

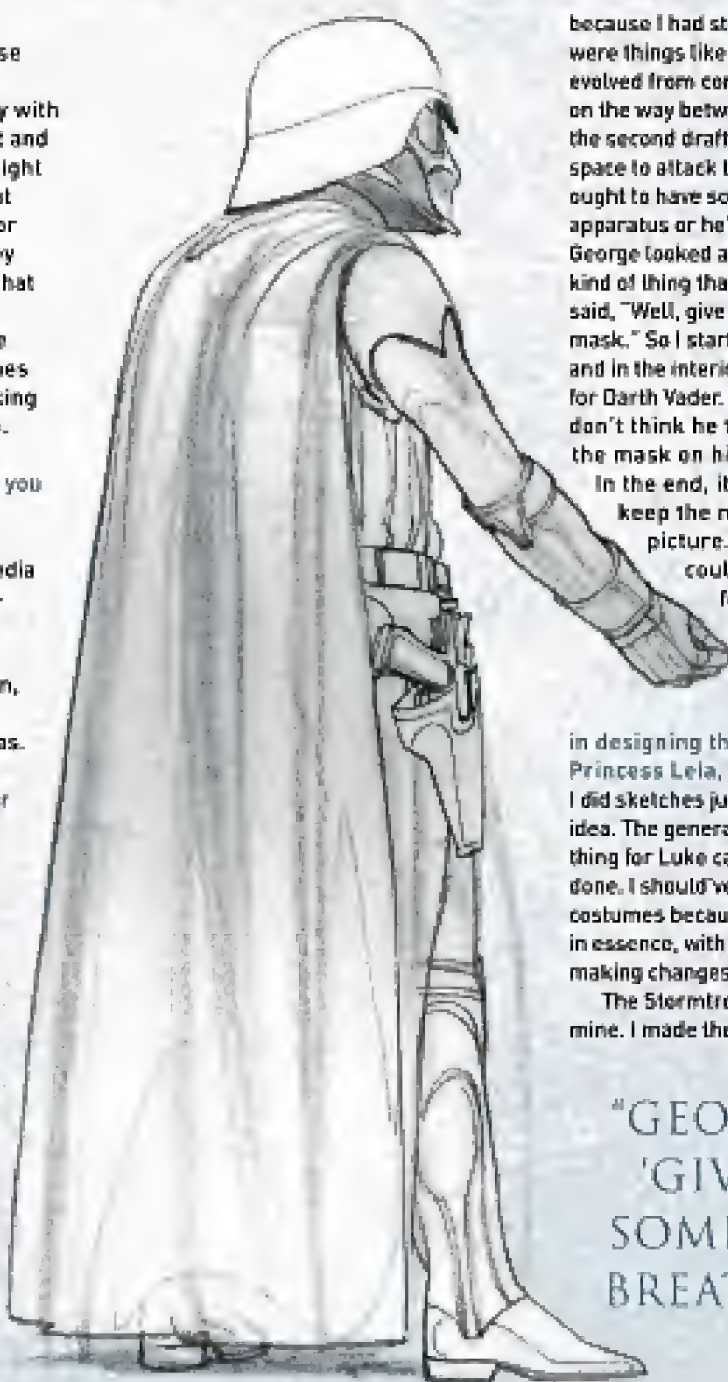
Had you done much film work before you started working with George? Nothing but animated films, and I'd done some storyboards for Encyclopedia Britannica. I worked with John Carroll-Louis on a film called *Time*.

I was there that day when George showed *THX 1138.4EB*, his student film, at Britannica. I thought it was really great. I was amazed at how good it was.

Did the script describe the droids or was their look something you came up with?

I think Artoo was just described as a small robot. I thought of him as running on a giant ball bearing—just a sphere, a circle, wheel-like. He had gyros so he could go in any direction on this ball. Gary and George visited England to see about studios and craftsmen and so forth, and I continued to work on more paintings. Then, one day, George finally came back in and said, "Well, looks like this is 'go.'"

Did George just give you the material to read and you did the paintings? We had quite a few exchanges



because I had strong feelings about it. There were things like Darth Vader's mask, which evolved from concerns I had about him dying on the way between the two spaceships [in the second draft, Vader descends through space to attack the Rebel ship]. I thought he ought to have some sort of breathing apparatus or he's going to die out there! George looked and I don't think it was the kind of thing that really bothered him, but he said, "Well, give him some sort of breath mask." So I started designing breath masks and in the interim designed the general look for Darth Vader. George okayed that, and I don't think he thought we would keep the mask on him all through the picture.

In the end, it was logical for him to keep the mask on for the whole picture. Why take it off? There could be a mysterious reason for him having to wear it, which nobody needed to know about.

Did you also have a hand in designing the costumes for Han Solo, Princess Leia, and Luke?

I did sketches just to illustrate the central idea. The general look and "leg wrapping" thing for Luke came from a sketch I had done. I should've got some credit for the costumes because I designed most of them, in essence, with John Mollo and his crew making changes to some of them.

The Stormtroopers were definitely mine. I made the biggest contribution from

"GEORGE SAID,
'GIVE VADER
SOME KIND OF
BREATH MASK!'"

a design point of view, simply because—at first—I was the only designer working on it. If John Barry had come in earlier, I'm sure a lot more of it would've been his. I think John liked what I'd done, and with his theatrical sense of good drama—of how to put things together, how to move the camera through things and how to get a good foreground going—he took elements that I had used and just kind

of enlarged them to become more suitable sets. His touch was very, very important in how the film worked. It certainly made the film what it was. Although he used my work kind of like reference material, he was able to draw from it, with his own bolder sense. ♥

Don't miss the next issue of *Star Wars Insider* for the second part of this archival interview with Ralph McQuarrie.



More Images

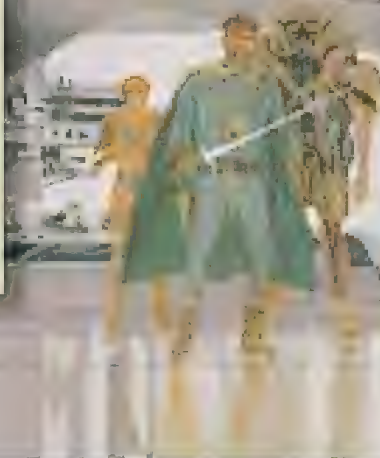
John Barry's original design for the Death Star.

Again: The original design for the Death Star, John Barry's design, which was used as a reference for the final design.

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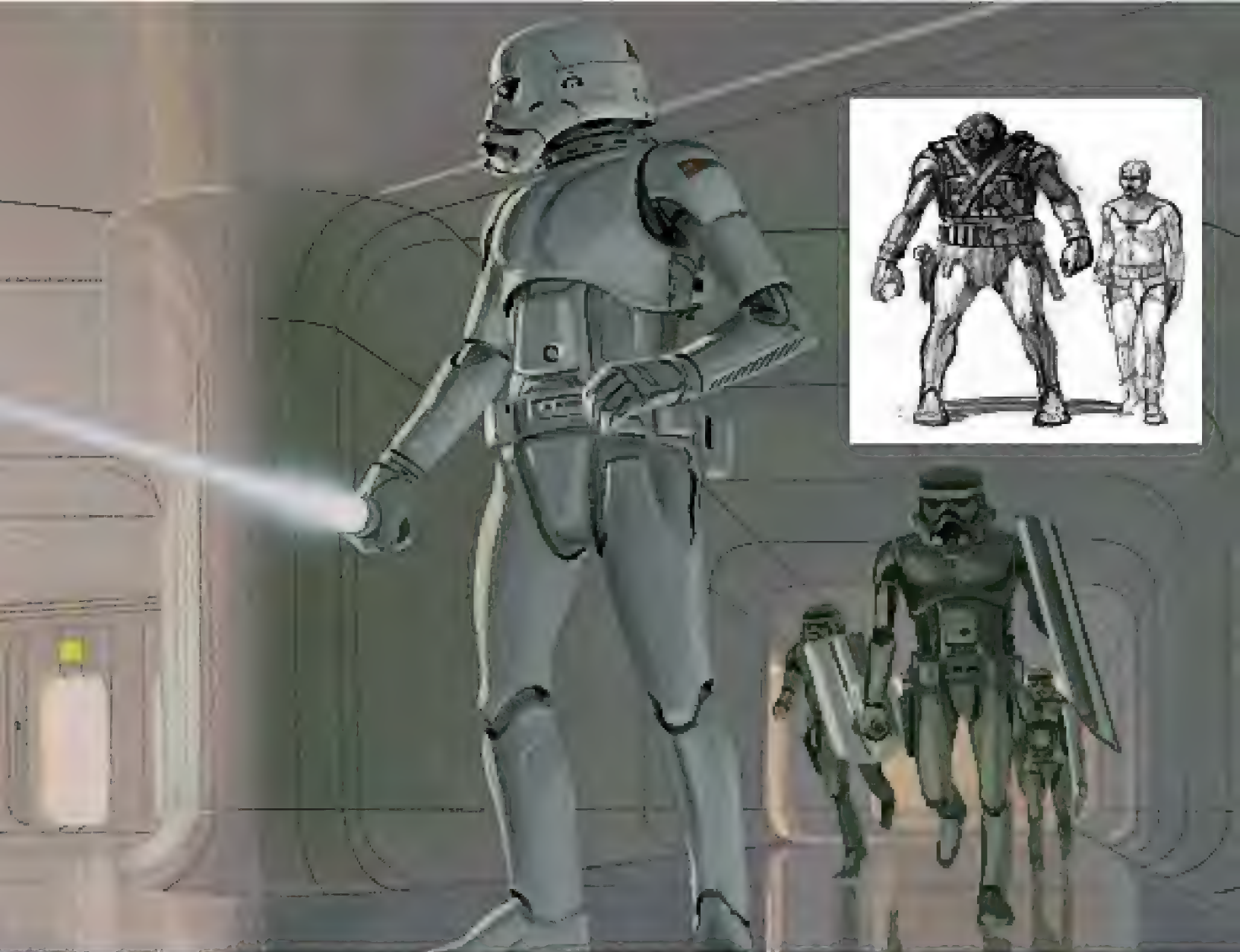
THE ART OF MATTE PAINTING

Ralph McQuarrie on the secret art. My spaceships weren't really that good; I tended to get a little old-fashioned-looking with them. They weren't quite zippy enough for John Dykstra. George Lucas said, 'Well, work on the matte paintings' with Harrison Ellenshaw. So I went up to Disney one day and looked at the matte paintings. I'd never seen any before. I looked at them and thought *Gee, they look awfully painterly to me. I don't see how these work on the screen. I had to think through the process—how do you blow a painting up on the big screen and make it work? I found out the screen wasn't all that big. It's a big screen from where you're sitting, but when you hold your arms up sight-size, it's fairly small and hardly occupies your peripheral vision.*



I realized if you made a painting three or four feet wide, it was going to get reduced in a sense. It was also going to be broken up into the grain of the film so that all the little brushstrokes and the





edges and so forth are softened. I think that's the reason that the paintings work on the screen.

Harrison said, "If you put a lot of detail in and are very careful that every little thing reads like an illustration, it looks like an illustration on the screen." You've got to obscure things a bit in such a way that your vision blurs things together. Of course, most of the paintings deal with the background, which is very frequently low on focus anyway, so things are on the soft side and a little obscured.

What was the process for this?

Harrison would put the clip in the camera at ILM and I would trace out the drawing on tissue. Most of the paintings that I did were just items that floated; like planets or the Death Star, which didn't particularly have any foreground elements. [For *Empire*], if they were going to add things that moved, like foreground figures that were done against a bluescreen, I'd just

**"YOU'VE GOT
TO OBSCURE
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lay it out so that I knew I had a diagram to show the camera crew where to put the figures.

So you didn't have to actually color-match anything?

No. It was just a matter of a gray wall. Everything else in the Death Star was gray. You'd maybe put a little color into the gray, maybe a little warm gray or cool gray.

I did quite a few paintings that I don't think got used. I made a matte painting that was a total sphere, which looked fine as a still, but it didn't look good when the camera moved in on it—the perspective wouldn't change on the screen so it looked kind of flat when it moved. I made a lot of paintings of the surface that I thought could be used to track in on, but they didn't do that. They used some of them; they looked pretty good.

Did you do some of those paintings of the reactor chamber when Obi-Wan is sneaking around?

Yeah, there was one painting looking down to show the tremendous height—that's one Harrison did. I did several showing similar things in tunnels and corridors that had plunging walls, and I completed them onto the studio floor there and I just carried the painting on down to show how far this wall went down. 🍌

EXCLUSIVE FICTION

ROLL OF THE DICE



BY KAREN MILLER
WITH ART BY DAVID RABBITTE

Really, on the whole, I could do without the bantha smell. It's a bit tricky trying to lose a game of pazaak on purpose without anyone working out that's what I'm doing, when all I can think of is how I'm going to stink of bantha for the next... forever.

So thought Myri Antilles, behind a carefully constructed expression of anxiety as she pretended to dither over whether or not she should draw another card from her main deck.

Sitting opposite, her opponent—a Balosar man whose scarred, shriveled antennae and prematurely wizened humanoid features betrayed a tragic and probably terminal addiction to death sticks—drummed his not-quite-clean fingernails on the gaming table, whistling tunelessly. Around them, there were growing hints of impatience from the handful of onlookers who'd abandoned their own risky pursuits to drink searingly colorful cocktails and eat illegal appetizers and gawk for a while.

With a little gasp, Myri fluttered her outrageously enhanced eyelashes in a tell-tale sign of panic. Time to wrap this up. She'd learned all she was going to from her jittery fellow player.

The Balosar waved his antennae with ill-concealed bad temper. "Come on, doll, I ain't got all day."

Mutterings from the crowd commented on his breach of manners. Shoulders drooping, Myri shook her head. "I'm sorry." Up came her chin. "All right, I've decided. I'm going to do it!"

With breathless bravado she snatched the precise card she needed from her main deck and turned it over.

The gamblers gathered behind her, shamelessly ogling, let out an almost sympathetic groan.

"Six," said the Balosar, and revealed his chipped, stained teeth in a grin. "Pushes you to twenty-four, doll. I win."

It didn't take much acting for Myri to make the crowd feel her pain as the Balosar scooped credit-chips into his already laden basket. Losing always hurt, good cause or not.

"Oh, well," she said, looking around with a pathetic smile. "I did say I was no Mebla Dule, didn't I?"

"A gambler who wasn't kidding?" one of the oglers said loudly in Corellian-accented Basic, her voice ripe with amusement. "Somebody catch me. I think I'm gonna faint."

Ripples of laughter. A babble of conversations. Myri slid out of her chair, gave a 'good luck' nod to the Rodian hustler who eagerly took her place, then threaded her way through the jostling, multi-specied throng of gamblers, and the gaudy droids tasked to serve them, towards the females 'fresher on the far side of the gambling hall. Well. What Captain Dobolo, the treble-eyed Gran, liked to call the gambling hall. Really it was just the converted upper deck of his ancient light freighter. Sadly for him, though, not even curtains of Kashyyykian spider-silk and dangling chandeliers crafted from Manaxian amber and Fondorian crystal would fool a blind passenger into thinking the *Galactic Princess* was a cruise liner. And nothing, not even the overburdened air scrubbers, could counter the stink of corraled dwarf bantha in the cargo hold beneath her feet.

Still. Transporting the smelly little beasts around both galactic rims made for an effective cover... as did Captain Dobolo himself. A Gran, financing interplanetary political and corporate espionage? She'd scoffed at the idea when Commander Bilpin from Galactic Alliance Security had briefed her. But she'd swallowed her skepticism after hearing what he had to say. Security's evidence was only circumstantial so far, sure, but it was also compelling. And the situation was deemed urgent enough to warrant an in-person investigation.

So here she was, gambling again, only this time not just with money... but with her life. Because Dobolo might look like a mild-mannered Gran, and the *Princess* might seem like a harmless system-hopping freighter, but in this case looks—so Commander Bilpin had claimed with confident authority—were deceiving.

The 'fresher door groaned open at her touch. Gritting her teeth, Myri squeezed past the bevy of females—bald, skull-ridged Dressatian, and Twi'lek with their head-tails glitter-painted, insectoid Aqualish and leather-clad Dug, their large, square teeth spangled with gems—all fighting for space in front of the wall mirror and dived into an empty stall. Blessedly alone, she closed her eyes for a moment and resisted the urge to rub at the experimental recording crystals implanted in her face. Bilpin had assured her the ruby and emerald look-alikes wouldn't cause any trouble.

"Guess what, genius?" she muttered, as the implants tingled her skin almost painfully. "You were wrong."

But she couldn't afford to fret about that now.

Suck it up, Antilles. It's not like you're gut shot in a downbelow Coruscant alley, or plummeting through atmosphere in a burning, out-of-control X-wing.

Uncoding the secured pocket in the leg of her slinky green jumpsuit, she checked how much Alliance money she had left after two days on board Gran's seedy gambling palace. Nearly

four hundred in loose chits, and an untouched card worth a thousand. Plenty, then. She'd been careful to lose more than she won, but not look like a desperate no-hoper. Of course, if she'd been playing properly she'd need an extra credit belt by now, to hold her takings. For a heartbeat, pride stung. Ruthlessly she smothered it.

The noise level beyond her stall had dipped so she came out, freshened up at the tiny hand basin, then inspected herself in the equally tiny mirror. A stranger's face looked

back at her: long silver hair intricately braided into loops, luridly green eyes, ridiculous swooping lashes, pouting aqua lips, and those extraordinary crystals, sparkling above her eyebrows and along her cheekbones' sculptured ridges. Inert until she fed them a biofeedback activation signal, to Captain Dobolo's security team and its scanners they'd looked like harmless body adornment.

Live and learn, Captain. Live and knitting learn.

She was the first agent to use the crystals in the field. If they worked as well as the lab techs claimed, they'd give the Galactic Alliance a much-needed advantage over the enemies of peace.

Please, let them work. We need all the help we can get.

A headache was brewing behind her enhanced eyes, partly from the crystals, partly from the smoke and noise of the gambling hall and a little—just a little—from the stress of worrying that she'd not succeed in her mission. And she had to succeed. Not only because Security needed the intel she was after, but because—because—

I love my dad, I do. But it's not always easy being his daughter.

Wedge Antilles cast a long shadow. One of these days she'd have to sit down with Syal, ask her big sister how she dealt with filling his shoes.

Only let me wrap up this assignment first.

She squeezed her way back into the gambling hall, and swept her gaze around the games of chance on offer as a raucous tide of noise washed over her. Piped-in music, elated winners' laughter and heartfelt losers' wails, the irritatingly cheerful chatter of Dobolo's droids as they piled his customers with food and drink.

Today was turning into a replay of yesterday. Before spending an hour losing at pazaak, she'd stood for nearly that long feeding

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credits into a succession of greedy machines in the lugjack bar. No winnings, and no hint of illegal dealings either, or questionable conversations for the biocrystals to record. During that time, after cruising just past Malastare, they'd docked with a shuttle, waved goodbye to the gamblers who'd emptied their pockets, and picked up a few more hopefuls eager to throw their money at Captain Oobolo. Might be an idea to go for a leisurely stroll, check out the new arrivals.

So she wandered past the binspo players, furrow-browed and intense. Past the suckers losing their shirts and jewelry over games of Imperial Commander. Back through the lugjack bar, just in case. Played three rounds of dejarik for a loss, a win, a loss. Paused to eat a nerf-burger, then accepted a tall glass of fizzy from a passing droid, and kept wandering. All the while, she could feel the hot buzzing of Commander Bilpin's embedded crystals, recording faces, voices and vital signs. She didn't let her green gaze rest, swept it casually over every gambler in the hall. Found wild hope and misplaced confidence, elation and despair. Everything she'd expected to find in a gambling den...but nothing to make Bilpin bare his teeth in a hunter's smile.

At least not until she stopped at the sabacc table.

Danger-honed instinct woke, and she stared at the players: a Corellian, a Besalisk, two Dugs, two Rodians and a Kaminoan. All but the Corellian were new arrivals—and something about one of them had tripped her alarm. The Besalisk. There was something subtly not right about the Besalisk.

But what? A greenie might look at the jovial gambler, with her wide-mouthed, sharp-toothed grin, and gaudily sequined tunic and the flashy gold rings smothering the fingers of the two hands that by the rules were kept flat on the table and think *There's an easy mark*. Being no greenie, Myri looked past the distracting exterior, looked instead at the flamboyant Besalisk's deepset amber-colored eyes. Cold. Sharp. Calculating. Cruel. Not gambler's eyes, those. They were the lethal eyes of a killer. She'd seen eyes like that too many times to be mistaken.

But it wasn't just the eyes that gave the Besalisk away. The glitz and glitter might be shouting *Don't mind me, I'm harmless*, but singing softly beneath that was a far deadlier song. Tension thrummed in the Besalisk's deceptively saggy body, a readiness to act with swift violence if violence was needed. Seeing it, sensing it, Myri felt her own muscles go taut with absolute certainty.

Gotcha.

Pretending to overbalance on her silly, spiky high heels, giggling apologies, she positioned herself at the front of the gathered sabacc spectators and activated a direct biofeedback pulse that would instruct the recording crystals to hone in on her quarry. The crystals buzzed in response. So far, so good.

The game of sabacc continued. As the stakes climbed to stratospheric heights and the other players started to sweat and swear and slap their cards to the table with growing concern, the crowd of watchers grew until Myri was being pressed hard from all sides. Surreptitious bets broke out among the oglers, credits changing hands swiftly and discreetly before they were picked up by a surveillance cam and a security droid hauled them away to be evicted when the next shuttle docked.

An hour later, the Besalisk took everything with an Idiot's Array, one of the rarest and trickiest feats in gambling. Pandemonium ensued. Bells rang, streamers popped, sparklers ignited and showered the hall with bright, brief light. "It's a jackpot!" the game's dealer droid announced, photoreceptors flickering in rainbow excitement. "The biggest win in *Galactic Princess* history. Huzzah!"

Myri watched, insides churning, as the Besalisk accepted her accolades from the droid, the chagrined defeated players and the crowd. She couldn't prove it, she couldn't even say for sure how it was done, but every instinct was screaming that the Besalisk had cheated. And she'd bet all the credits in her

pocket that Captain Oobolo's dealer droid was key to the swindle. Which meant—which *had to mean*—

"Congratulations, Hamajum!" Captain Oobolo boomed, his mottled skin flushed with pleasure, as the crowd parted as he approached. "A fine victory indeed. It's not every day we see someone pull off an Idiot's Array! Come, give me a few moments to tell me how you managed it. Everyone else? One drink on the house!"

Under the cover of noisy celebration, Myri followed in the two criminals' wake as they headed for the bar. Behind them, the dealer droid announced a new game of sabacc, another dealer droid drummed up trade for more pazaak, server droids began handing out the free drinks, and the bantha-scented air rang with the trilling of lugjack machines. The crowd broke apart only to reform elsewhere, and the gambling continued.

"I'll have a fizzy," Myri told the bar droid, handing over her empty glass. Taking its replacement, keeping Oobolo and the Besalisk in the corner of her eye, she wormed her way towards them, as close as she dared get. Close enough to see the Besalisk pass Oobolo a data crystal in a slick sleight-of-hand move worthy of a Jedi. If she'd not been looking for it she'd never have seen the exchange, never captured the moment with Bilpin's experimental crystals, and—

A jostle, an exclamation, and somebody's drink tipped down her back.

"Hey!" she protested, turning. "Why don't you watch what—"

Then the words died, because she was looking into a face she'd never seen before...and eyes she knew almost better than her own. They belonged to the one and only Wedge Antilles.

"Sorry, sorry," her father gabbled. "All my fault. Clumsy. Let me help clean you up!"

With a last look at Oobolo, merrily slapping his Besalisk contact on the shoulder, the perfect picture of a gracious host and good loser, Myri let the skinny, bald, mauve-skinned man hustle her to the other end of the bar, and waited until a droid had given him a damp cloth.

"What are you doing here?" she whispered fiercely, as her father sponged her free of sticky, sickly sweet cocktail. "And don't you dare say watching my back because—"

"Mission's blown," he replied, keeping his voice too low for eavesdropping. "Bilpin's crystals aren't as secure as he thought. Or Oobolo's tech is better. Or both."

Stang. "I'm being jammed?"

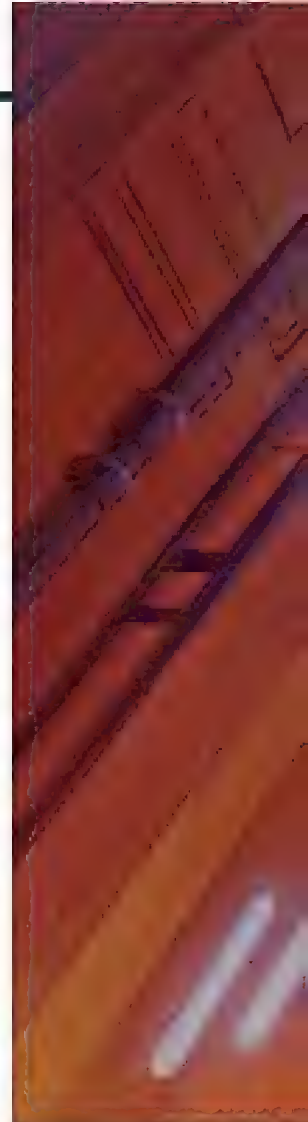
"Both directions. With no way to reach you, I had to drop in."

Despite her jumping nerves, Myri felt a surge of relief. This wasn't personal, then. He'd have come to save whoever Bilpin had sent. But if she was being jammed, then chances were Oobolo's security team was even now looking for the signal's origin. She sent a biofeedback signal to deactivate the crystals, then risked a glance over her shoulder.

"Doesn't matter," she said, still whispering. "I got the intel hand-off."

"The Besalisk?"

"Right," she said, turning round. But the Besalisk was gone,





"I ain't done nothin' wrong!"

Startled, Myri fumbled the credit chit she was about to feed into her lugjack. When she straightened up after retrieving it, her mauve-colored father was standing in front of her.

"Droids with scanners," he said, his familiar eyes intently serious. "Five of them, which is five too many. Time to go."

She stared into the crowd, where a tall, physically imposing droid, uncomfortably reminiscent of a battle droid, waved a hi-tech sensor wand over one of Dobolo's gamblers.

"Yes," she agreed. "But go where?"

Before her father could answer, the public address system crackled to life.

"Ladies, gentlemen, and gentle-folk all," Dobolo's voice greeted them. "This is the captain. Apologies for the inconvenience, but our routine public safety sweep has revealed that someone on board is unwell. Now there's no need to panic, it's just a nasty rash, but I'm sure that whoever our afflicted friend is, he or she doesn't want to suffer needlessly or spread it around. So please remain calm and co-operative while my health team finishes up. And to take the sting out, have another drink on the house."

Agitated chatter, even some laughter, as the crowd reacted to Dobolo's announcement.

"Dad? Go where?" Myri asked again, leaning close. "And how? Don't tell me you've got a ship stashed in your suit pocket."

Her father grinned. "Nearly. There's a cloaked Alliance cruiser standing by. We eject in a lifepod and send up a flare, they'll come get us."

"Ha," she said, grinning back. "If you weren't mauve and bald, I'd kiss you."

"We've studied this ship's schematics," her father said. "Each fresher has an access duct leading to a maintenance bay. We'll meet down there and head for the lifepods. The duct panel in the females' fresher is on the back wall, third up, second from the left. See you soon."

Myri walked away from him without a backwards glance, neatly avoiding the droids. Inside the females' fresher she found a lone Twi'lek, her pale blue head-tails turned greenish from too many drinks.

"They want you outside," she told the muzzy-eyed gambler. Queasily compliant, the Twi'lek staggered out. Unhooking the slender, dangly earring from her left ear, Myri gave it a quick twist, activating its miniaturized laser scalpel core, sealed the fresher door then hurried to locate the access duct panel. Finding it, she used the scalpel again, swiftly severing the plate's bolts. Then, after lowering the plate to the floor, she tucked the scalpel in her jumpsuit's front pocket and wriggled feet-first into the access duct.

Just as she let go, a hard metal fist hammered on the fresher door...and the last thing she heard as she plunged into darkness was a droid's voice demanding to be let in, right now.

Her ride down the access chute was fast, bumpy and bruising. And when she shot out the other end she didn't land on hard decking...but on a warm, woolly mass of alarmed dwarf bantha.

"Stang!"

The stink of fresh bantha dung was a hundred times worse down here. Flailing about in the half-light, fending off wet, anxious muzzles and blunt, hairy foreheads, feeling the animals mill and shift, in danger of falling beneath their heavy feet, Myri struggled to find a way to safety.

"Myri! Over here!"

And that was her father. Using her knees and elbows as bantha-prods, trying not to suffocate while holding her breath, she escaped the bantha corral.

and so was Dobolo.

Eyes warm, her father tossed the stained cleaning cloth onto the bar. "Good work."

There was no time to savor the compliment. Heart thumping, she made a sweep of the room, looking for trouble. "How long till the next shuttle, d'you know?"

Her father made a show of ordering her an apology drink.

"Three hours," he said, handing her the glass of fizzy. "So we lay low, and stay close."

She quirked an eyebrow. "But not too close. I mean, you and I haven't been formally introduced!"

"Again, so sorry," he said loudly, eyes glinting, with both hands raised as he bobbed his bald head. "Good fortune, lady. Farewell."

Good fortune, yes. They were going to need it.

Myri let out a deep breath. Three hours wasn't that long. Besides, even if Dobolo's people did come looking, what could they find? With the crystals deactivated, she was as good as invisible. And it didn't matter that they were watching everyone on the secure-cam net, either. Provided she didn't do anything stupid, like win a jackpot, they wouldn't look at her twice.

We'll be fine. Just fine.

And they were... for two hours and twenty-six minutes. Then Dobolo's security droids crashed the party.

"Hey!" someone shouted. "Don't shove that thing in my face,

"DROIDS WITH SCANNERS." WEDGE SAID, HIS FAMILIAR EYES INTENTLY SERIOUS. "FIVE OF THEM, WHICH IS FIVE TOO MANY. TIME TO GO."

"So much for studying the schematics!" she wheezed, as he took hold of her arm to help her over the corral's durasteel side. "When was the last time you had your eyesight checked?"

Her father's teeth gleamed briefly in the gloom. "Everyone's a critic. Come on. The lifepods are this way."

"Are you sure?" she grumbled, following. "Because the last thing we need is—"

Blaster bolts stitched a line of red fire across the deck plating before them.

"Halt!" demanded the lead security droid. Four others loomed behind it, heavily armed and menacing. "On the floor, face down, hands where we can see them."

"Face down?" Myri echoed. "On this floor? You've got to be joking!"

Taken aback, unused to an argument, the droid stared. Not looking at her father, Myri slid her scalpel earning out of her pocket. "The more the merrier, I think."

He'd given her the earrings for her last birthday. Another gleam of teeth as he grinned. "So do I."

Before the droids could react, he unsheathed his own laser pen

"COME ON, DAD!" MYRI GROANED, REACHING THE FIRST POD AND SLAMMING ITS HATCH. ONE LAST LOOK BEHIND HER AND THERE HE WAS, BURSTING OUT OF THE ENGINE BAY WITH A DROID ON HIS HEELS.

and in a perfect duet they loosed the banthas from their corral. With an added "Sorry!" Myri laser-blipped the nearest hairy rumps, sending the bewildered creatures into a panic.

"Run!" her father shouted, pointing. "That way! I'll drop us into realspace, you get the Intel out of here."

Leave him? But—

"Go!"

No time to argue. The panicked bantha were as lethal as the droids, who were wasting no time in shooting anything that got in their way. Now the air stank of charred hair and meat as well as fresh dung. The bantha bellowed, blundering between herself and her father as blaster shots zinged off wall and ceiling and floor.

Summoning all her speed, strength and cunning, Myri broke for freedom. Felt her left shoulder pop as she crashed a droid aside, felt a crack in her right knee as she hurdled a fallen bantha. Sweat stung her eyes, blinding her. She couldn't see her father.

Never mind. Keep running. General Antilles can take care of himself.

Startled Chadra-Fan menials scattered as she sprinted through the freighter's dimly-lit engineering bay. Lifepods, lifepods, where were the kriffing lifepods?

There. Up ahead. Two of them. Heading for them, she felt the freighter shudder as its lightspeed engines cut out. Way to go, Dad. She wanted to wait for him, but if she did he'd skin her alive. The mission mattered, nothing else. She knew that. She did.

"Come on, Dad, come on!" she groaned, reaching the first lifepod and slamming open its hatch. One last look behind her—and there he was, bursting out of the engine bay with a droid on his heels. Slang, but the slinking tinny could run. Oobolo must've been tinkering.

Not waiting, no, she knew better, but before making her escape she opened the other lifepod's hatch. A few heartbeats' advantage was all Wedge Antilles needed.



She heard blaster fire as she slammed her own pod's hatch closed then hit the launch key. An explosion of propulsive gases and she was spat out into space, distant stars twinkling, the bulk of Oobolo's freighter looming large. But where was the Alliance cruiser?

A biofeedback surge reactivated Bilpin's crystals, so Alliance security would know it was her. A quick check of the lifepod controls revealed rudimentary steering and a comlink. She fed the link a secure ID code, started broadcasting, then pressed her face to the viewport. Looking for her father. Looking for help.

And there! There was the Alliance cruiser, almost close enough to kiss, its beautifully sleek lines rippling into sight as the cloak deactivated. And there was the other lifepod. Her father. But something was wrong, the 'pod was spinning, not drifting. Sparks spat before vacuum killed them. An unlucky blaster-hit. The other lifepod was crippled.

Blinding streams of light as Oobolo's freighter blasters fired—and missed. But next time? Myri struck her fist to the viewport. She couldn't sit on her hands, watch Oobolo blast her father out of the sky. Even as the Alliance cruiser leapt into the fray, answered the freighter's belligerence with its own lethal stream of plasma, she threw herself on the 'pod controls. Let the cruiser keep Oobolo and his shockingly well-armed freighter distracted, and she'd do the rest.

The lifepod was sluggish, reluctant. Worse than a Podracer with a belly full of sand. Slang. What she wouldn't give to be a Jedi! Swearing under her breath, Myri coaxed and cajoled and bullied the useless piece of junk into an intercept course, feeling her bones creak and her muscles shriek as she willed the kriffing 'pod to close the gap...close the gap...



The lifepods connected with a teeth-jarring thud.

As searing lines of laser-cannon fire criss-crossed the darkness of space, she bounced her lifepod dent by dent along the hull of her father's crippled craft, nudging and compensating until she was locked in behind him, and they were in line with the Alliance cruiser. Her lifepod's cramped interior strobed with white-hot lightning, making her blink. She couldn't believe Dobolo didn't turn tail and run. That intel the Besalisk had passed him had to be explosive if it was worth this kind of risk.

She glanced again through the viewport. Her father stared back at her from his lifepod, close enough to touch, his mauve face wet with blood. But he was grinning at her, waving. Holding up his comlink. She snatched up her own, thumbed it back to its default setting and clicked it on.

"You're good?" her father demanded, his static-crackled voice loud in the pod's near-silence.

"Yes. You?"

"Good enough. But my controls are fried, kiddo, so it's up to you. Get us home."

His confidence killed her fear. Myri laughed. "Yes, sir!"

She aimed their lifepods at the Alliance cruiser's open hangar deck and wrung every last spark of power from her sputtering, inadequate engine. Stared white-knuckled at their destination as the sweat poured down her face, feeling the skin between her shoulder-blades crawl. One lucky shot from the freighter, just one, and they'd be tiny bits of slagged metal, blood and bone, floating forever in the vast cold of space.

Time slowed. The lifepods swam through the void. Suspended between possibilities, Myri felt her scrapes and bruises complain. Felt her pilot instincts move her fingers on

the controls, a tweak this way, a shimmy that, as the sublight engine labored and plasma fire etched threats of disaster into the night.

And then, between blinks it seemed, the sky was full of safety.

Dreamily, she watched the Alliance cruiser's shadow swallow them, felt the darkness fall over her face. Blinked again as the hangar lights banished darkness, bit her tongue bloody as her lifepod struck the hangar deck, hard. Through the viewport she saw her father's lifepod crunch to the deck in front of her, then tip onto its side like a stricken shark. She saw people, running towards them, their Alliance uniforms familiar and welcome.

A tech popped her lifepod hatch from the outside. "Hey in there. You all right?"

Myri nodded. "I'm fine. Thanks," as she clambered out. The tech was staring, his expression peculiar. She put it down to the garish crystals she wore, and turned in search of her father.

"Myri!" he said, approaching. The blood on his face had dried to a red mask, clashing horribly with the mauve skin. "Good job."

Two small words holding a galaxy's worth of pride. She smiled at him. "Thanks."

A crowd had gathered, and she noticed they were all staring with that same peculiar expression. Then someone started to clap. Within moments everyone was clapping, even her father.

Disconcerted, Myri blushed. "What? Cut it out, would you? Seriously, people. *God?*"

The crowd parted to reveal a familiar, rangy figure, Garik Loran. His lean face somber, he let the applause continue a few more heartbeats, then halted it with a raised hand.

"That was some stunt," he said, eyes hooded. "Guess we'll have to call it The Antilles Maneuver."

She could never tell if her father's old friend was joking, or not. All she knew for certain was that Garik Loran didn't care for show-offs. "Sorry, sir," she muttered. "But I couldn't leave General Antilles to be fried."

"I suppose not," Loran agreed. He regarded her quizzically. "You do know that what you did with those lifepods is technically impossible?"

Her father was grinning. "No such thing as impossible. Not for an Antilles."

As Loran rolled his eyes at her father, Myri felt her blush deepen. Okay. Enough. "Sir, the mission. Did you —"

Loran nodded. "Yes, we received your transmissions intact. Dobolo made a run for it just as you reached us, but don't worry. We tagged him in time. He and his friend and the intel will soon be in Alliance custody."

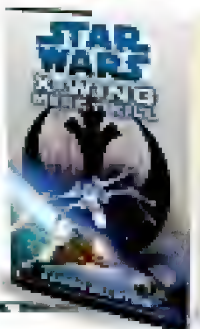
"That's good to know, sir."

"Indeed," said Loran, and stepped back. "Now if you two would come with me, there's some debriefing to be done." His eyebrows lifted. "And after that, Myri, there's another mission I'd like to discuss with you. Everyone else? Back to work."

"Ah well," said her father, as they walked side by side from the hangar. "You know what they say, kiddo. The reward for a job well done is another job."

That was very true. But she didn't mind. She smiled as her father's fingers clasped hers once, then let go.

"Bring it on, General," she said. And laughed. 🍷



EXPANDED

Mercy Kill by Aaron Allston is out now!

More on Karen Miller can be found at
www.karenmiller.net

Visit David Rabblite's website at
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UNIVERSE

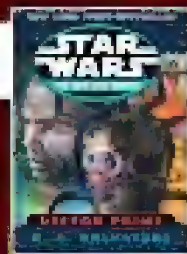
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CHEWBACCA'S LAST ROAR

WORDS: NEIL EDWARDS

Strong, furious in battle, and yet honorable, Chewbacca was a steadfast friend and protector to Han Solo, as well as his extended family, throughout the *Star Wars* movies and much of the Expanded Universe. It was difficult to imagine him dying, or to imagine what could kill him. And yet, in 1999, the mighty Wookiee met his end.

In R.A. Salvatore's *New Jedi Order* novel *Vector Prime*, Chewbacca accompanies Han and his younger son, Anakin, on a seemingly routine cargo run to the planet of Sernpidal. The trio are unaware, however, that the fearsome Yuuzhan Vong are massing to invade the New Republic. As fate would have it, the Yuuzhan Vong have targeted Sernpidal as a demonstration of their power. Using organic technology, the Vong plan to pull the moon called Dobido crashing down on the planet's surface, destroying its civilization. It would be the opening shot in the Yuuzhan Vong War.

With the moon heading toward the surface, the Solos and Chewie save as many civilians as they can, helping them escape in the *Millennium Falcon*. With time running out, Chewbacca saves Anakin from being swept away, honoring his life debt to Han and his family, and sacrificing his own life. Chewbacca remains on the planet as Dobido is about to strike it, roaring in defiance as he prepares to be crushed.

As the Solos and Skywalkers mourn the loss of their Wookiee friend, they conclude that the galaxy has become a more dangerous place as a result.

WHAT THEY SAID

"Chewie's death had the biggest impact everywhere. A lot of people, even some internally at Lucasfilm who were not involved in the creative decision, would come up to me afterward and say, 'How could you?' But to counter some of the criticism, we have encouraged more Chewie backstories in comics and other publishing since his death; in a way, it's made him even more important than he would have been if he hadn't suffered a fictional demise.

"When Chewie died, people sat up and took notice that the NJO was going to be different from what had come before, and that the *Star Wars* galaxy was not necessarily a safe place anymore. I always

felt very badly that Bob [Salvatore] got the brunt of the criticism, however." —Lucy Autrey Wilson, Publishing Director (retired)

ESSENTIAL TRIVIA

After his death, Chewbacca was memorialized by having a gigantic likeness of his face carved into a wroshyr tree on his home planet of Kashyyyk.

Comprising four issues and later collected as a trade paperback, the 2000-2001 comic book series *Star Wars: Chewbacca* featured the Wookiee's friends narrating tales about his amazing life.

WHY IT'S A CLASSIC

Chewbacca was the first major character to die since Darth Vader in *Return of the Jedi*, and the first hero to unexpectedly meet his demise since Obi-Wan Kenobi way back in *A New Hope*. In the Expanded

Universe it may have seemed that all of the main protagonists would be safe from being killed off, but the death of Chewbacca proved that all bets were off. After Chewbacca's death, *Star Wars* fans could no longer be sure that pivotal characters such as Luke, Han or Leia would survive, especially with a new generation of Solos and Skywalkers beginning to make their presences felt. It's perhaps no surprise that Chewbacca died saving one of the Solo children, almost like a passing of the baton to a new era of characters.

With the introduction of the now threat of the Yuuzhan Vong, the death of Chewbacca also proved that these invaders were a serious threat, and ushered in a new, often darker series of stories to be told in the Expanded Universe. Chewbacca's death shook up the galaxy; it would never be the same again.

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EDITED BY NEIL EDWARDS

BLASTER

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Learn how to create your own *Star Wars* Origami, experience a *Galactic Pop-Up Adventure*, and enjoy some prequel era fun with *LEGO Star Wars: Anakin to the Rescue!*

72 BOUNTY HUNTERS

Meet the stars, show the evidence, win the bounty!

74 BANTHA TRACKS

By the fans, for the fans!

78 RED FIVE

Producer Robert Watts on his favorite Lucasfilm locations!

80 COMICS

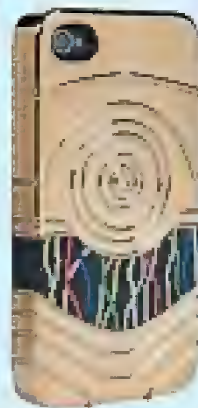
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST!

SITH CASTAWAYS BATTLE TO LIVE IN *LOST TRIBE OF THE SITH: SPIRAL!*

"THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BLASTER AT YOUR SIDE, KID."

68 INCOMING

THE LATEST *STAR WARS* GEAR YOU'LL WANT IN YOUR COLLECTION





BOOKS



FROM BRICKS TO BOOKS

KIDS CAN JOIN THE ACTION WITH *LEGO STAR WARS: ANAKIN TO THE RESCUE!*



LEGO and *Star Wars* are a perfect team, with the videogames and toy sets proving to be reliable bestsellers. This September, Scholastic continues its series of LEGO *Star Wars*-themed storybooks with *Anakin to the Rescue*, a 24-page adventure aimed at readers aged four to eight.

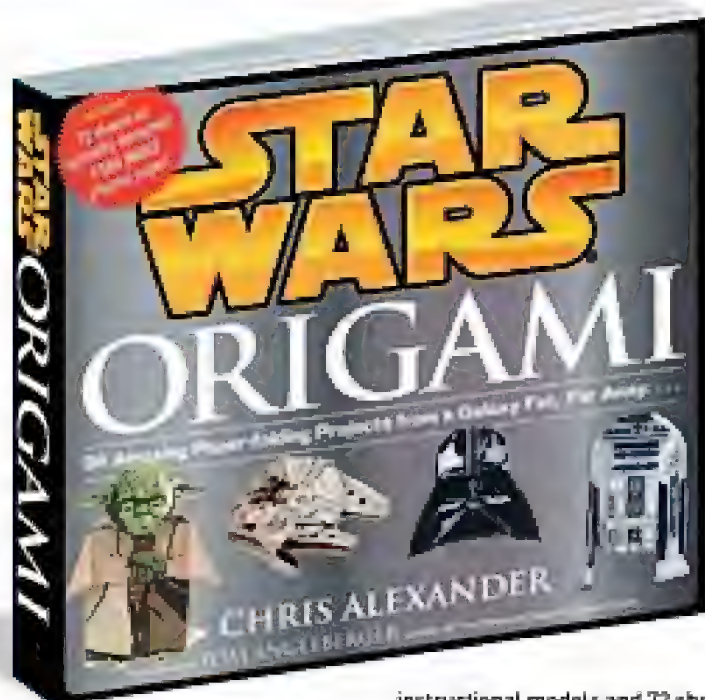
"The response has been overwhelmingly positive," says editor Rex Ogle. "It really is amazing how LEGO can re-imagine some of pop culture's greatest characters and make them even more fun. It's the perfect mix of design, humor, and adventure."

Says writer Ace Landers, "The best response that I've received about these books has been that parents enjoy them just as much as kids, which is important when you're reading the same story over and over again. The *Star Wars* galaxy is constantly growing, and LEGO is very similar in that it is a toy where there are endless possibilities of play."

"These books are a wonderful entry into the world of *Star Wars* for younger fans who may not be ready to appreciate the deeper undertones [of the movies]. But LEGO *Star Wars* also revives, at least for me, the youthful joy and awe of seeing these movies for the first time."

BECOME A PAPER PADAWAN

FOLD YOUR OWN CHARACTERS, SHIPS, AND CREATURES WITH *STAR WARS ORIGAMI* WORDS: DANIEL WALLACE



Origami is an ancient art experiencing a modern upswing, thanks in part to *Star Wars*-themed bestsellers like Tom Angleberger's novel for kids, *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*. If you're a fan who has been longing to fold your own creations, *Star Wars Origami* is the manual you've been looking for.

"I've been trying to publish this book for a long time," says writer Chris Alexander, whose foldable templates include everything from R2-D2 to the Millennium Falcon. "I've taught origami classes at the *Star Wars Celebration* conventions. With the success of the *Origami Yoda* series, the popularity of the animated television series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, and the increasing popularity of origami in general, the time was finally right."

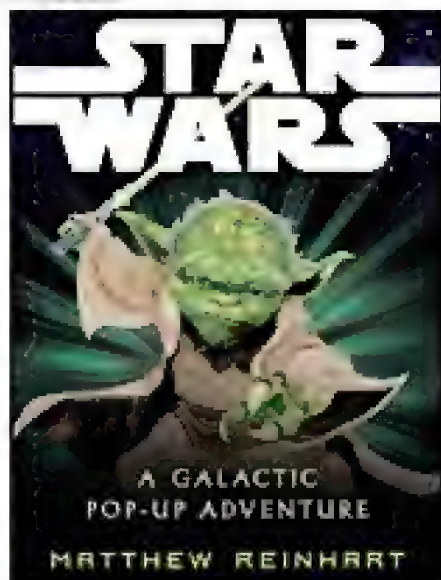
The 272-page book includes 36

instructional models and 72 sheets of specially designed origami paper. In selecting the models, Alexander represented all six movies and all levels of folding skill. His favorite design might be Jabba the Hutt, but his very first *Star Wars* model came about almost by accident. "I'd been teaching a penguin model to a class of first graders, and while driving home I was thinking about the basic shape," he explains. "A penguin has short, stubby feet, little wings, and a head very similar to the B-wing. I pulled out a piece of paper and started modifying the model, and presto!"

Star Wars Origami is available from Workman in August, and features an introduction by *Origami Yoda*'s Tom Angleberger. Says Alexander, "The wonderful thing about origami is that anyone can do it, and with almost any paper on hand."

STAR WARS: A GALACTIC POP-UP ADVENTURE IS THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"Pop-up books are completely hand-assembled and expensive to manufacture, so I have to be mindful of how much paper is used and how many attachment points are glued," says Reinhart. "For example, two of the Geonosis arena beasts—the



The final spread is a special treat that includes a light-up lightsaber. "It's a transforming pop-up that begins as Anakin Skywalker and slowly, as the page opens further, changes into Lord Darth Vader," says Reinhart. "The working saber even changes from Jedi blue to Sith red!"



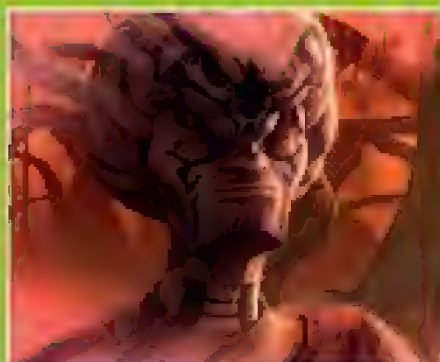
ALL THE LOST TRIBE STORIES, PLUS AN ALL-NEW NOVELLA.
NOW IN A SINGLE VOLUME

Now, the stories get a second life in print in *Last Tribe of the Sith: The Collected Stories*, debuting on July 24. Included are all eight existing tales (released under the titles *Precipice*, *Skyborn*, *Paragon*, *Savior*, *Purgatory*, *Sentinel*, *Pantheon*, and *Secrets*) plus the all-new novella *Pandemonium* and Miller's maps of the planet Kesh. The collection is a perfect lead-in to the new comics series *Last Tribe of the Sith: Spiral*, releasing on August 8.



As related to
Zeland Y. Chew

Hispano-Mexicano (Hispanic Mexican) 100



Ventress's, mother hands Ventress over to Mother Talzin, who in turn hands Ventress over to a gruff-looking, Siniteen mobster named Hal'sted. Hal'sted hails from Rattatak, whose raiders threaten to enslave the Nightsisters for use as mercenaries. The short story "Restraint," included with the 2012 edition of the novel *Darth Maul: Shadow Hunter*, shines further light on this tenuous relationship between the inhabitants of Rattatak and the Nightsisters.



COMICS

DISCOVER THE LOST TRIBE

THE POPULAR PRINT SERIES
EXPANDS TO COMICS WITH
LOST TRIBE OF THE SITH: SPIRAL
WORDS: DANIEL WALLACE

What happens when a ship full of Sith warriors becomes stranded on a strange planet, turning its passengers into castaways? That premise was the basis of John Jackson Miller's *Lost Tribe of the Sith* e-book series, which told tales of the stranded Sith and the changes arising from centuries of isolation on their new homeworld of Kesh. This August, the *Lost Tribe* makes a jump into comics, giving readers a new perspective on a society that was founded by the bad guys.

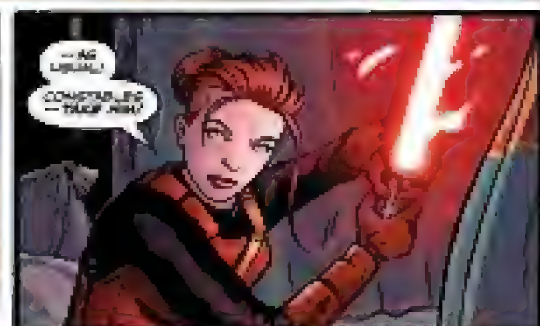
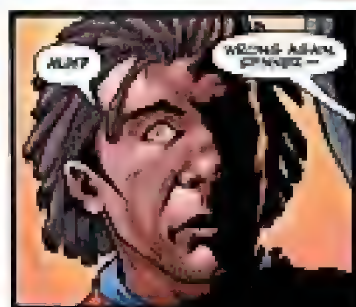
"The Sith who crashed were not rulers, but rather middle managers in the service of evil," Miller points out. "They believed in Sith tenets, but had never really had a chance to try to rule on their own. Landing on Kesh set off sort of a *Lord of the Flies* dynamic, with



"Landing on Kesh set off sort of a *Lord of the Flies* dynamic."

everyone wanting to rule the world. There are stories of castaway societies and colonies that perished precisely because they couldn't unite against common enemies. The Tribe has to learn to avoid that the hard way."

The first *Lost Tribe of the Sith* short stories took place during the Great Hyperspace War approximately 5,000 years before the events of the movies. In the *Fate of the Jedi* novels, distant descendants of the original *Lost Tribe* members appear during Luke Skywalker's era. The debut comic series is called *Lost Tribe of the Sith: Spiral*, and it comes at a midpoint during the Tribe's exile. Set roughly 3,000 years



Writer: John Jackson Miller, Pencils: Andrea Momi, Inks: Pierluigi Bazzucchi, Colors: Michael Atiyeh



RODNEY
2012

before the movies, it tells of a time when the Sith realized there were other things inhabiting the planet besides its Keshiri natives.

"The short stories revealed that their world was much larger than they initially thought," explains Miller. "In the period of *Spiral*, they're beginning to see what else is out there. And what's out there is an enemy more powerful than anyone in the Tribe, with a very interesting connection to the past. It's something I've dropped hints about as we've gone along, and it really will change the way the Tribe understands their world."

"Andrea Mutti is creating a unique look we call 'Star Wars without technology.'"

Along with this major storyline revelation, *Lost Tribe of the Sith: Spiral* introduces another all-new element into the setting: artwork! "The world was fleshed out first in prose, which laid the groundwork and established the setting," says Miller. "For the comic, artist Andrea Mutti is creating a unique look we call 'Star Wars without technology.' We'll finally get a look at uvak and Keshiri and the locale itself."

Andrea Mutti (*Knights of the Old Republic: War!*) describes his work on the series as solid, strong, and full of passion, adding that illustrating *Star Wars* is an experience unlike anything else. "It's like I feel the Force everywhere, like a real sensation," he says. "It's concrete, pure emotion. For this series, we have no technology, no metal and such, so it's a world apart. I have to build new characters and creatures, including one new spaceship that's a sort of ancient *Millennium Falcon*."

Just prior to issue #1 of the comic, Random House is releasing a paperback collection of all the *Lost Tribe* e-books under the title *Lost Tribe of the Sith: The Collected Stories* (see related coverage this issue), which contains an all-new novella set during the timeframe of *Spiral*.

Miller has now written about the *Lost Tribe* in novels and in comics, and he pulled off a similar trick on the *Knight Errant* series. Which raises the question: Does he see himself as a comics writer or a prose writer?

"I'm a writer!" he says. "Comics, prose, nonfiction, games, whatever it is, I don't intend to tie myself to any one thing. I have too much fun shifting between media."



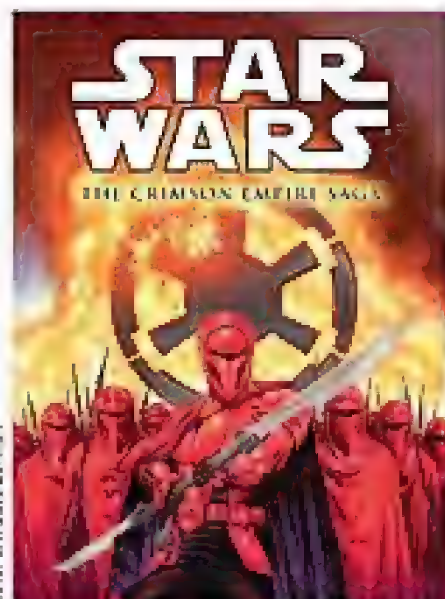
Cover art: Paul Bennett

THE COMPLETE CRIMSON EMPIRE

THE SAGA OF KIR KANOS GETS A HARDCOVER RELEASE

Crimson Empire tells the tale of Kir Kanos—the last of the Emperor's Royal Guardsmen—and his quest for revenge against the pretenders to the Imperial throne. Originally published as three separate limited series during a 14-year period from 1997–2011, the full trilogy is available as a deluxe, 500-page hardcover on September 12.

With a story by Dark Horse's Mike Richardson and Randy Stradley and artwork by Paul Gulacy and P. Craig Russell, *Star Wars: The Crimson Empire Saga* features appearances by Darth Vader, Boba Fett, Luke Skywalker, and Admiral Pellaeon, including the first-ever appearance of the Yuuzhan Vong, in the form of the duplicitous spy Nom Anor. Don't miss this chance to own a cornerstone of the post-*Return of the Jedi* Expanded Universe!



Cover art: Dave Dorman

STAR WARS OMNIBUS

CLONE WARS VOLUME 1
THE REPUBLIC GOES TO WAR



TOUR OF DUTY

GET ALL THE EARLY CLONE WARS COMICS IN *STAR WARS OMNIBUS: CLONE WARS VOLUME 1 – THE REPUBLIC GOES TO WAR*

These days, the Clone Wars are being taught in the animated TV series of the same name and its tie-in comics, but back in 2002 the infamous galactic conflict had a very different feel. Immediately after the release of *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones*, Dark Horse told the very first Clone Wars tales in the pages of the monthly series *Star Wars Republic* and special Jedi one-shots.

Though the individual issues have been collected as trade paperbacks, the newest *Star Wars Omnibus* combines three previously released volumes into one 400-page mega-volume at an unbelievably low price. Watch Obi-Wan Kenobi, Anakin Skywalker, Mace Windu, and Quinlan Vos battle it out against Asajj Ventress, Count Dooku, and the bounty hunter Durge in these influential tales.

Star Wars Omnibus: Clone Wars Volume 1 – The Republic Goes to War brings together the previous collections *Clone Wars Volume 1: Defense of Kamino*, *Volume 2: Victories and Sacrifices*, *Volume 4: Light and Dark*, and *Free Comic Book Day 2006*. It's available from August 22.

Pinchuk: Jan Courtema; Inks: Dan Parent; Colors: Brad Anderson



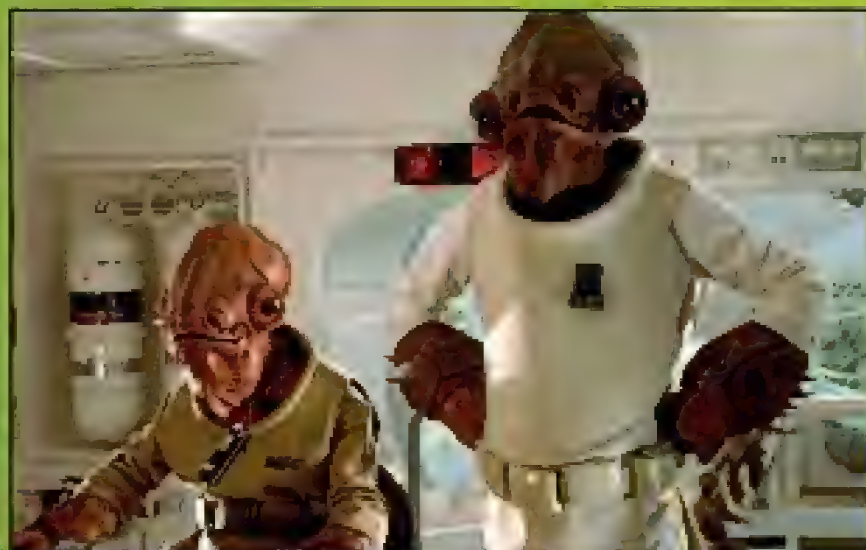
ASK LOBOT

As related to Leland Y. Chee

Vietnam Ackbar, cousin of Admiral Ackbar, is a pilot in the *Republic* Republic novel series. So what does his backstory say about Ackbar? He has first names, but just one name, and his last name, why? As Ackbar, he'd first name, and it's, what is his first name? Stefan Pinchuk via *Star Wars Insider* on Facebook.

The current EU establishes that the Mon Calamari typically have both first and last names. Most of the named Mon Calamari seen in *The Clone Wars* have first and last names, including King Yos Kolina, Senator Meena Tills (also seen in *Revenge of the Sith*), and Jedi Nahdarr Webb. Many of the more prominent EU Mon Calamari characters also have first and last names, including Bant Eerin from the Prequel Era junior novels and Cha Niathal from the Legacy Era novels.

The Essential Guide to Warfare recently revealed Admiral Ackbar's first name to be "Glat," borrowed from Glat Gahan, a character in the *Legacy* comics.





INCOMING

THE LATEST *STAR WARS* GEAR YOU'LL WANT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION! WORDS: PETE VILMUR

LEGO



GUNGAN SUB

In *The Phantom Menace*, Jar Jar Binks guided Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi through the treacherous underwater planet core in this Bongo sub. The Gungan sub features a large cockpit, cargo bays, storage boxes, rotating tail propulsion, missiles and even a mini-sub with harpoon. This set includes four mini-figures [Queen Amidala, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Qui-Gon Jinn, and Jar Jar Binks] and contains 465 LEGO pieces.
Price: \$69.99.



SITH FURY-CLASS INTERCEPTOR

From *Star Wars: The Old Republic*, the lethal Fury-class Interceptor is piloted by the evil Sith Lord Darth Malgus, who scans for Republic-occupied territory. Armed with four missiles, and with folding wings, the Interceptor's large hold can also be used to transport Sith ground troops. The set includes three mini-figures [Darth Malgus and two Sith troopers] and contains 748 LEGO pieces.
Price: \$89.99.

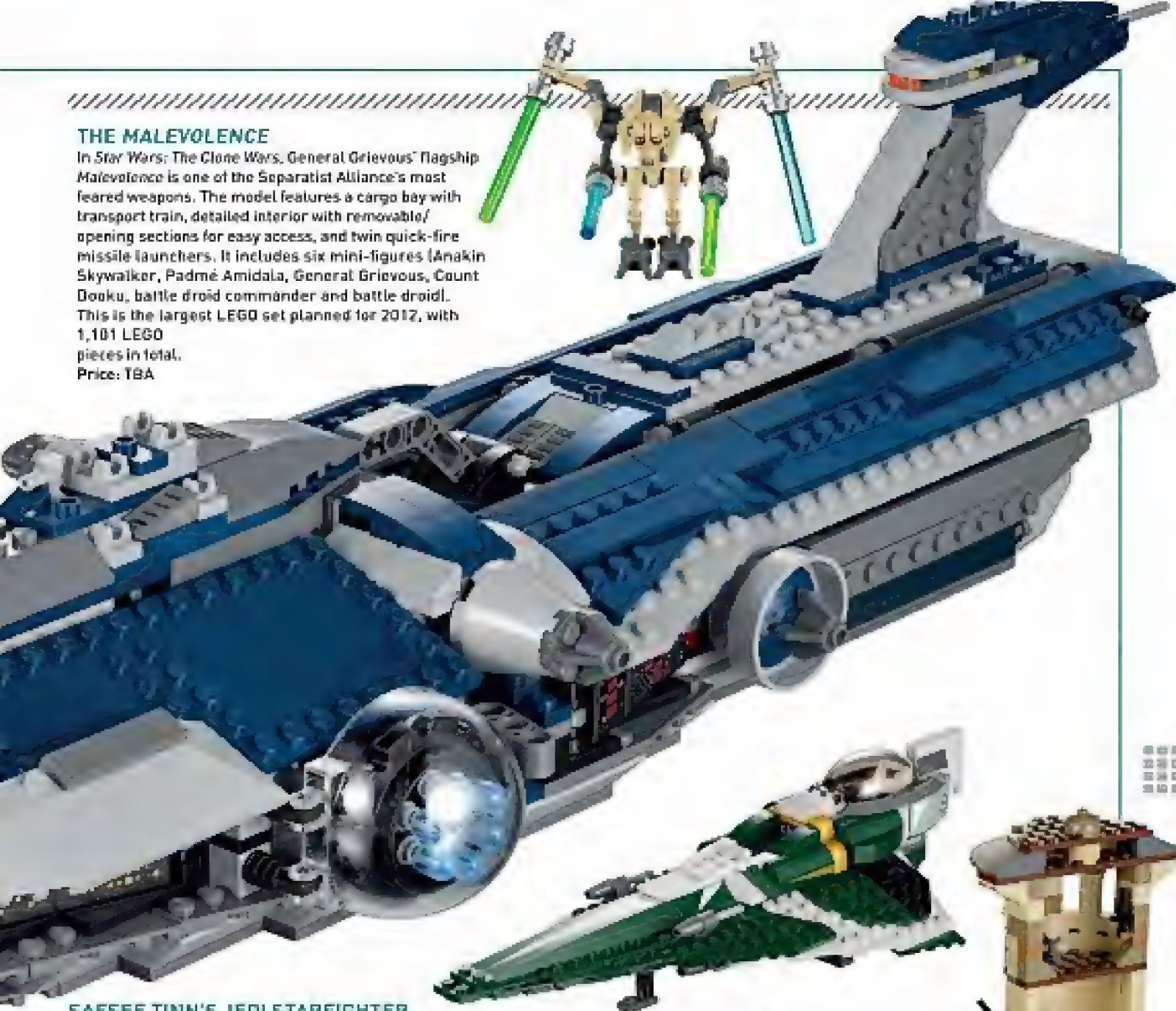
PLANET SETS

LEGO adds three new sets to its ever-growing system of planets from the *Star Wars* universe, including Yavin 4 with X-wing starfighter and X-wing pilot; Bespin with Twin-Pod Cloud Car and Lobot; and Endor with AT-ST and AT-ST driver. Each set comes with a display stand and name plaque.
Price: \$9.99 each



THE MALEVOLENCE

In *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, General Grievous' flagship *Malevolence* is one of the Separatist Alliance's most feared weapons. The model features a cargo bay with transport train, detailed interior with removable/opening sections for easy access, and twin quick-fire missile launchers. It includes six mini-figures (Anakin Skywalker, Padmé Amidala, General Grievous, Count Dooku, battle droid commander and battle droid). This is the largest LEGO set planned for 2012, with 1,101 LEGO pieces in total.
Price: TBA



SAESEE TIIN'S JEDI STARFIGHTER

Jedi Master Saeese Tiin hunts for Separatist troops in his Jedi Starfighter, ready to go into battle. Tiin's green starfighter is equipped with four missiles and a cockpit section that detaches to become the Jedi Master's very own escape pod. This set contains 244 pieces.
Price: \$29.99.



JABBA'S PALACE

Recreate scenes from Jabba's palace in *Return of the Jedi* with this sizable set including several mini-figures, including Princess Leia disguised as Boushh, Chewbacca and a carbonite-frozen Han Solo. Special features include Jabba's sliding throne with trap door and hidden treasure, an entrance gate with movable guns, a flick missile on the detachable roof and a detachable watchtower. In addition to the three hero mini-figures, this set also includes Jabba, Salacious Crumb, Bib Fortuna, a Gamorrean guard, Oola, and a B'omarr monk. The set totals 717 LEGO pieces.
Price: \$119.



MIMOCO

STAR WARS SERIES 8 MIMOBOTS

The ever-expanding series of Star Wars Mimobot USB flash drives carries on with this all-new group containing Luke Skywalker, Admiral Ackbar, Jabba the Hutt, and slave Leia. A fifth—a biker scout—will be limited to 1,000 pieces and will be available exclusively at San Diego Comic-Con and Star Wars Celebration VI. Price: \$19.95 (8GB version), \$29.95 (16GB), \$39.95 (32GB), and \$69.95 (64GB)



HASBRO

DARTH MAUL ULTIMATE FX LIGHTSABER

Two Darth Maul lightsabers can now be combined for Ultimate FX double-bladed action! Each sold separately, the lightsabers are powered up at the press of a button, triggering the blade's light effects and power-activation humming sound. Swinging the blades through the air activates motion sensor-controlled sound effects like clashing, battle impact and crackling sounds. Includes three "AA" batteries. Price: \$34.99 [each sold separately]



BD&A

IPHONE 4/4S COLLECTOR AND POSTER CASES

Travel the galaxy in style with these cases for your iPhone 4/4S which feature reinforced shells that snap easily onto your phone. Character Cases include R2-D2, C-3PO, Darth Vader and Chewbacca (which is fuzzy!). Star Wars poster cases include the original Star Wars poster art by Tom Jung and R2-D2/C-3PO poster art by Del Nichols. Price: TBA



VANDOR

LARGE JEDI TIN TOTE AND STEIN

Among the new offerings from giftware manufacturer Vandor are this *Return of the Jedi* large tin tote featuring artist Kazuhiko Sano's theatrical poster illustration, as well as a heavy 20-ounce ceramic stein depicting Darth Vader and the Star Wars logo. Price: \$13.49 [for the tote]; \$13.99 [for the stein]



GENTLE GIANT STUDIOS

BLUE SNAGGLETOOTH JUMBO KENNER FIGURE

Blue Snaggletooth is the informal name of a rare Kenner action figure from 1978 that was later changed to better reflect the character's on-screen appearance. In a nod to the original, this figure comes in a sealed blue Kenner bag and is available exclusively at San Diego Comic-Con 2012 in July. Price: TBC



MCQUARRIE STORMTROOPER DELUXE MINI-BUST

Ralph McQuarrie is often credited with developing much of the look and feel of the *Star Wars* trilogy, and Gentle Giant has reinterpreted his vision for the iconic Stormtrooper in their latest from the "concept art" mini-bust line. Looking significantly different from the final film version, it's a wonderful nod to the evolution of the *Star Wars* galaxy. The McQuarrie Stormtrooper features interchangeable heads, arms, and hands, and is a San Diego Comic-Con 2012 exclusive. Price: TBC



BLUE CLONE TROOPER STATUE

This 2012 *Star Wars* Celebration VI convention exclusive Blue Clone Trooper statue comes highly detailed, with each individually numbered piece hand-painted and with a matching certificate of authenticity. Price: TBC



LANDO JUMBO KENNER FIGURE

Gentle Giant continues their new line of vintage *Star Wars* action figure reproductions with the release of Lando Calrissian. Digitally scanned from a 1981 Kenner action figure and reproduced to a substantial 12" tall, this figure includes a vinyl cape and blaster, just like the original! Lando also is encased in a re-sealable re-creation of the *Empire Strikes Back* blister card. This is a *Star Wars* Celebration VI exclusive. Price: TBC

BOUNTY HUNTERS

MEET THE STARS, SHOW THE EVIDENCE, WIN THE BOUNTY! *STAR WARS INSIDER'S* BOUNTY HUNTERS SECTION IS SPONSORED BY KOTOBUKIYA. EACH ISSUE'S WINNER WILL RECEIVE A FANTASTIC KOTOBUKIYA *STAR WARS* STATUE KIT, WORTH AROUND \$100!

KOTOBUKIYA

BOUNTY WINNER!

BEGINNER'S LUCK!

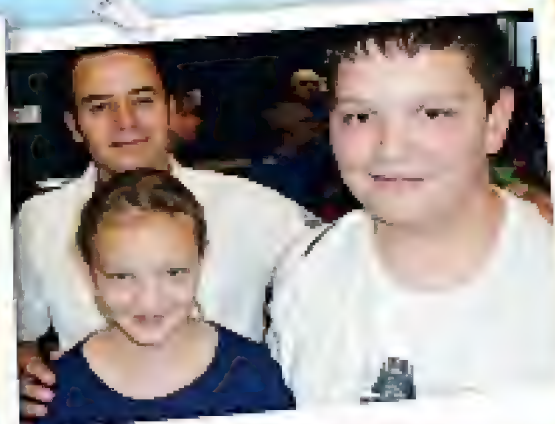
I have been a *Star Wars* fan since I was five years old. I was first introduced to it when *Revenge of the Sith* came out in theaters. I was hooked instantly. My first Hasbro action figure was R2-D2! Now I'm a huge *Clone Wars* fan. When I found out that my area had a big comic convention, I just had to go, so my sister and I went to the convention with my dad. First we met Bonnie Plesse (young Beru Whitesun) and she gave me my very first autograph. Then we went to check out the local 501st division. As I walked the convention floor, I tried to spot Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), whom I knew was appearing there. I turned around and there he was. I said to my dad, "He's bigger than I thought he was!" He signed my *Star Wars Insider* #124 with its Chewbacca and Ahsoka cover. He told me that when Ashley Eckstein (Ahsoka Tano) came around I should get her autograph, too. Then my sister met Adrienne Wilkinson (Marris Brood/The Daughter). After that, I met Daniel Logan (young Boba Fett). Meeting him was by far the coolest highlight of the day. He kindly answered the questions I had about *The Clone Wars*, signed a photo of Boba Fett, and took photos with my sister and me. The Force was with me on my first trip to Austin Comic Con! Carter Bradley, via email

CAN YOU GO ONE BETTER?

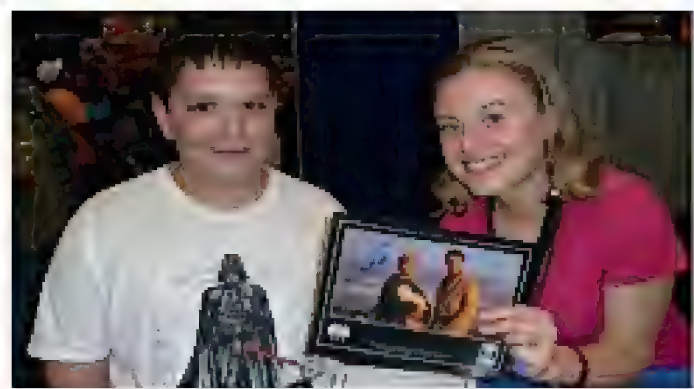
DO YOU KNOW NATALIE PORTMANN? ARE YOU FRIENDS WITH FRANK OZ? MAYBE YOU'VE ARM-WRESTLED AHMED BEST? WE WANT TO SEE! SEND PHOTOS OF YOUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE STARS OF *STAR WARS TO: BOUNTY HUNTERS*, *STAR WARS INSIDER* VIA THE CONTACT DETAILS ON PAGE 3, OR EMAIL US AT STARWARSINSIDER@TITANEMAIL.COM



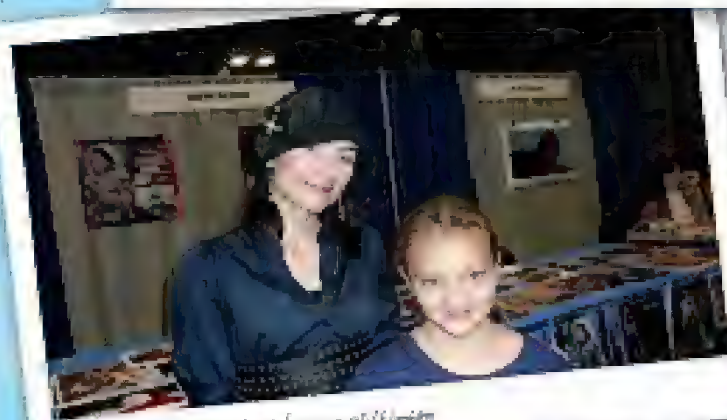
Carter with Peter Mayhew



Carter and his sister with Daniel Logan



Carter with Bonnie Plesse



Carter's sister with Adrienne Wilkinson

NEIMOIDIANS AND GENERALS!

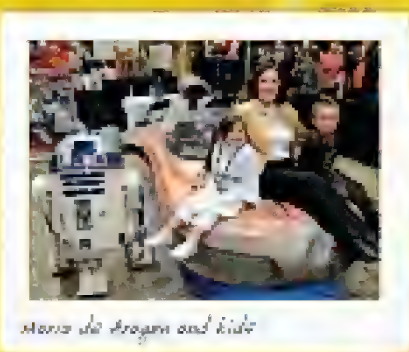
I attended a sci-fi convention for the British Heart Foundation in Carshalton U.K. in April, 2012. As luck would have it and because it was the reason I attended the convention, I got the chance to meet two great Star Wars actors—Julian Glover (General Veers) and Jerome Blake (Rune Haako). The day was terrific and most of the proceeds from the day went to the charity. Ben Leung, Cheltenham, England, and Miami, Florida, U.S.A.



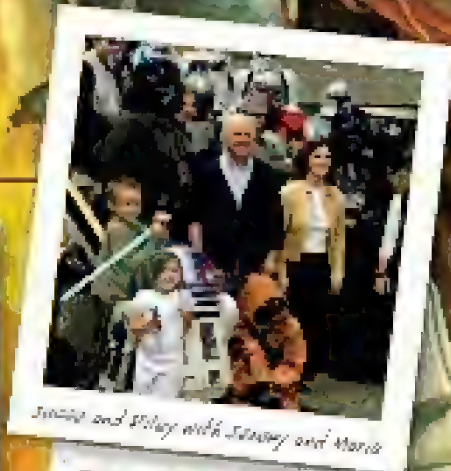
Ben Leung (left) with Jerome Blake



Ben Leung with Julian Glover



Maria de Aragon and kids



Jesse and Riley with Jeremy Bulloch and Maria de Aragon



Jeremy Bulloch with Jesse and Riley

GREETING GREEDO!

My kids, Jedi Jesse and Princess Riley, along with R2-D2 and the landspeeder, got to meet Jeremy Bulloch (Boba Fett) and Maria de Aragon (Greedo) at the Montreal Comic-Con last September. Both actors got to take a ride in the landspeeder. While there, we also got to watch the latest episode of *The Clone Wars* in French! Dana Powers, Tilton, New Hampshire



Jon Kellag (right) with Greg Proops

THE CROWDS ARE GOING NUTS!

In April 2012, a friend of mine and I went to Zanies comedy club in Chicago to meet everyone's favorite Podrace commentator, Greg Proops (Fode)! Mr. Proops was very gracious and signed a few autographs for us—he even took this picture with me. It was well worth the wait in the cold and windy Chicago night!

Jon Kellag, Yorkville, Illinois

ALWAYS TWO THERE ARE!

I wanted to send you this picture of Ray Park (Darth Maul) and myself meeting during a Free Comic Day in Nebraska in 2010. He was a really nice guy and was one of the Star Wars actors I'd been dying to meet the most.

Matthew Nichols, via email



Ray Park with Matthew Nichols



VOL. 36

BANTHA TRACKS



BY THE FANS
FOR THE FANS

THE BANTHA TRACKS ALMOST-ANNUAL WEDDING EDITION

No summer would be complete without *Bantha Tracks*' "Almost-Annual Wedding Edition!" Either through careful, elaborate planning or small, well-kept surprises, these couples shared their love of *Star Wars* on one of the most important days of their lives.

In some cases, *Star Wars* was the major theme of the wedding. Often, there were simply small touches sprinkled into a few well-chosen places. No matter how, *Star Wars* added an element of fun and individuality to the proceedings. Each of these couples stands out as very special in a galaxy of unions.



Wiebe and Sharon van der Werk

↑ YOU'LL FIND I'M FULL OF SURPRISES

"At our wedding, my wife Sharon surprised me by secretly putting two LEGO *Star Wars* characters on our wedding cake," writes Wiebe van der Werk of the Netherlands. "They turned out to be Luke and Leia," he continues. "Perhaps not the most obvious choice to symbolize a wedding, but it makes a lot more sense when you realize Sharon has only seen Episodes IV and VI!"

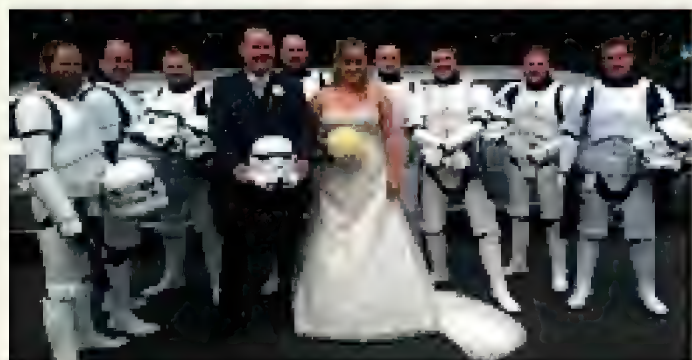
GET IN TRACKS!

THERE IS NO ESCAPE...

Adele and Collin Symington were married in Templepatrick, Belfast, Northern Ireland. A classic location for a beautiful wedding, but unbeknownst to the bride, Collin had planned some elaborate Star Wars surprises.

"As the guests were seated and waiting on the bride to walk down the aisle," writes Collin, "eight Stormtroopers formed two lines outside the hotel for the arrival of the bridal party. Adele then realized there was no getting out of Star Wars ever, once she got married!"

Although Adele was surprised by the Stormtroopers, she had in fact done some Star Wars pre-planning with Collin for the wedding. The couple had chosen a string quartet that played, among other Star Wars tunes, the "Cantina Band" number. Each of the table names at the reception was named after one of the planets from the movies.



↑ "As she stood beside me, she looked like a princess in her ivory and lace dress!" says Collin. "She made me the happiest man in the world that day!"

After the vows and photographs, including photographs with the Stormtroopers who are good friends of Collin's from the Emerald Garrison, the couple and their guests headed to the reception. As it happened, the surprises were not yet over for the bride. "The cake," reports Collin, "had been left in my capable hands."



↑ Table signs at the wedding were designed and made by Martin Ryan.



↑ Collin had a baker from his local town, known as the "cake fairy," create an incredible Jabba the Hutt and Slave Leia cake for their reception.

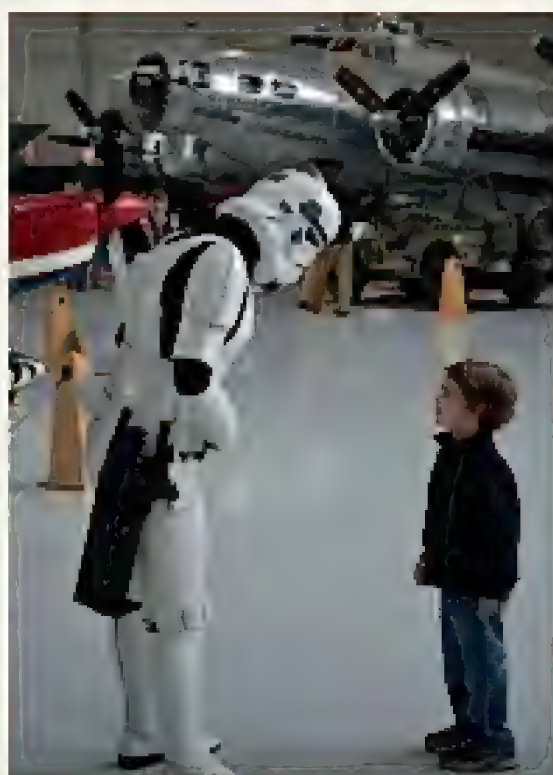
"The first impressions were stunning to watch as all the guests got closer to the table and looked with amazement," says Collin. "They all reported it was perfect, with a few laughs in between." A serious Star Wars collector, Collin had hoped to maybe freeze Jabba's head in "carbonite" to display it with his collection, but instead the couple and the guests shared it in celebration.



THE COUPLE THAT PLAYS TOGETHER....

Allan Quick and his wife Karyn are both members of the 501st and Rebel Legions in the state of Oregon. They costume with the Cloud City Garrison and Kashyyyk Base as a Stormtrooper and Princess Leia, respectively.

"Sometimes kids call me Luke Skywalker," says Allan, who is the Commanding Officer of the Cloud City Garrison. "I go along with it and tell them I am in disguise to rescue the Princess. We have a lot of fun with the groups and help with many charities, such as Children Miracle Network."



ALWAYS TWO THERE ARE...

"Crickette and I met for the first time at a 501st Legion charity troop," recalls Mark Fordham, who often costumes as Darth Vader with the 501st Legion. "Almost a year went by with us trooping side by side, me staring at her through my tinted lenses, and dreaming of what it would be like to be married to someone who loved Star Wars and trooped as much as I did. But she was way out of my league!"

Fordham reports that, although he was a little shy to start a new relationship, Crickette eventually made the first move—then "the rest is history."

→ "Underneath my gorgeous wife's beautiful wedding dress, she was wearing her TK boots," recalls Fordham. "Anyone who questioned her choice of footwear was promptly told, 'Hey, they're white, aren't they?'"

In 2010, Fordham, dressed as Darth Vader, was one of the Star Wars "officiants" at the Celebration V commitment chapel at the huge fan festival. At the time, he was finalizing a divorce, and yet joining loving couples in these symbolic ceremonies of their union.

"Under my Vader mask, I was envious," he recalls. "Having a loving companion who would tolerate my affinity for Star Wars, much less share it, seemed so unlikely. As a thank-you for my participation I was given a gift bag, the same as the joined couples received. It was full of great little Star Wars items that read 'Celebrate the Love.' That phrase seemed to mock me, but I hung on to the swag. After all, it was Star Wars swag!"

After meeting Crickette, Fordham reports that the same swag has taken on a whole new meaning: "Crickette actually exceeds my own Star Wars affection!" he concludes. "I'm celebrating the love now."



↑ "I made a special tabletop decoration," says Fordham, "and guests signed a large photo of Crickette and me in costume."

→ "For our wedding announcement, Crickette wanted to make the invitation Star Wars-themed," continues Fordham. "When my family and friends saw the invitation, their response was one of sympathy for my poor wife having to put up with my Star Wars mania. Naturally, I delighted in explaining that my wife had commissioned the design, not me!"

Fordham reports that the wedding was small and private, but that the couple allowed their true colors to shine at their open house afterward.

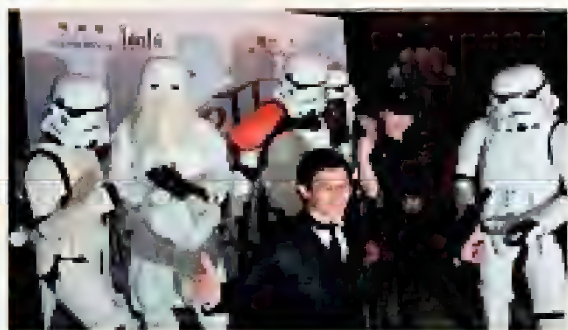


↓ BEST WHEN SHARED

"The 501st Taiwan Outpost has a long history of entertaining the public with famous Chinese television and movie stars," writes Roy Wang, Commanding Officer of the Outpost. "Among those stars is the hardcore fan of Star Wars, Chang Wei-Wen, better known as 'Jacko.'"

Jacko, who has kept contact with the Outpost for a decade, married Miss Lisa last December in a Star Wars-themed wedding with a star-studded guest list.

"It's lovely what the 501st Taiwan Outpost has done for me on my wedding day!" says Jacko. "The media in Taiwan went crazy over the Star Wars wedding. I'll be happy and honored to be in the Bantha Tracks wedding edition."

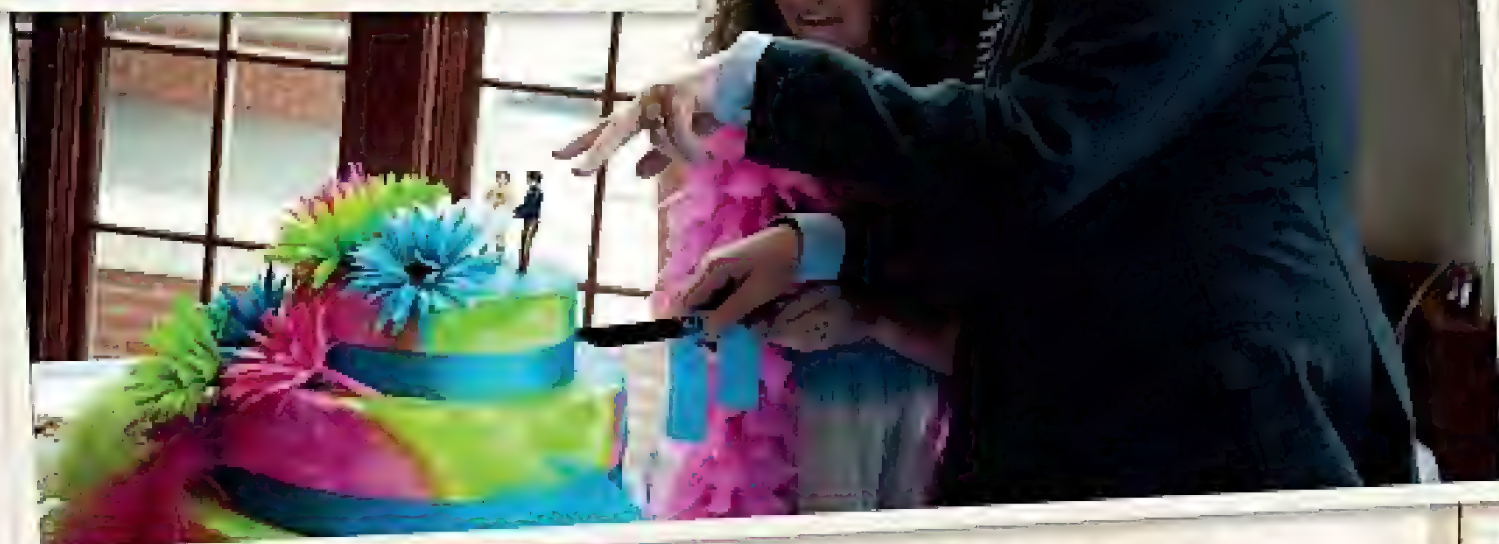


SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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Each submission must include the creator's name, age, contact information, date the work was created, and a statement that the work is original, and created by the person submitting it.

Send electronic files to banthatracks@starwars.com, or send your snail mail to Bantha Tracks, c/o Mary Franklin, P.O. Box 29901, San Francisco, CA 94129.



↑ THIS TOPS EVERYTHING

Max and Ashley Gerskin admire their Han Solo and Princess Leia cake topper at their wedding.

IT'S NOT SIMPLY STAR WARS

The happy couples in this "Almost-Annual Wedding Edition" of *Bantha Tracks* frequently cite a shared love of *Star Wars* as one of the important interests that binds them together. While enjoying a common interest is always valuable, my observations over the years of working on this edition point to other very important, personal characteristics that these folks share.

It's said that a good sense of humor is one of the most important ingredients for a lasting relationship. Observing these couples, I see humor that is well-developed indeed, and an essential talent for making their partner, whether they love *Star Wars* or not, smile. Together they help their friends, families, and often the guests at their weddings laugh and smile and enjoy some light-hearted fun.

Clearly, each of these couples has enviable creativity at their disposal. Good ideas, talent, and a knack for making unique experiences create memorable events for themselves and their guests. Not content to stay inside the box of established relationship and wedding protocols, they make their weddings, and likely their marriages too, unique to their individual style. It's hard to imagine many better tools for forging a lasting bond.

Finally, in reading the submissions for the Almost-Annual Wedding Edition, I observed a constant that did not have a chance to come through to the fullest on these brief pages.

These couples—and it's true for so many *Star Wars* fans—share a heightened sense of compassion for those around them. Many spoke of meeting on troops for charities or while working together for community events. They share joy in bringing joy to others. Doing some good together is one of the most important binders in their toolkit for strengthening and enhancing their bond.

Sharon and Wiebe, Adele and Collin, Allan and Karyn, Jacko and Lisa, Mark and Crickette, Max and Ashley, thank you for your inspiration for the rest of us. Here's wishing you years and years of fun, creativity, compassion... and of *Star Wars*...to come!

Get in Tracks!



Mary Franklin

Editor, *Bantha Tracks*



↑ Speaking of great qualities that make me smile, this formal-attired Bosk, made by Dan Peterson in homage to Bosk on the *Robot Chicken* television show, is charming, dashing, and dressed impeccably for the occasion.

RED FIVE



ROBERT WATTS ON FIVE LUCASFILM LOCATIONS!

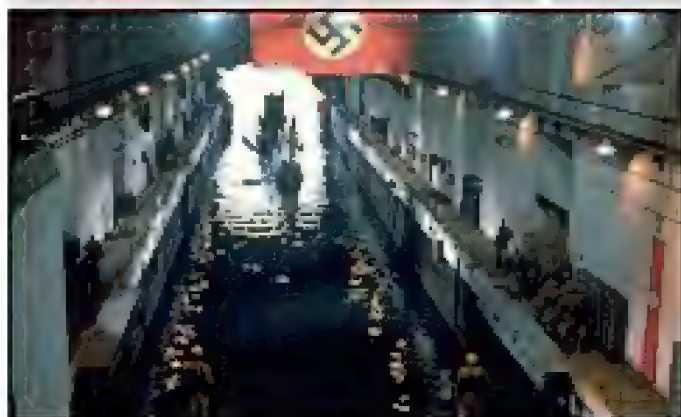
Around the world with *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*
producer Robert Watts!

1 THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

On *The Empire Strikes Back*, we shot the Hoth scenes in Norway in a place called Finse. It was freezing cold, so not my favorite place to be. We managed to achieve more than we set out to do, because we had a blizzard while we were there. I got Harrison Ford to the location on a snowplough because he was going to be in a blizzard scene where he rescues Luke. We were going to do that scene on the soundstage at Elstree, because you can't create a blizzard in the open air—but suddenly we had one for real, so we shot it.



2 RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK



The *Indiana Jones* locations were far more varied, as the films are Earth-orientated. On *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, we started shooting the film in France at a place called La Rochelle. We finished on schedule despite the fact that we had terrible weather to start with. I'd rented a submarine from Bavaria Studios in Munich, which they'd built for the film *Das Boot*. We weren't allowed to take it out if the waves were over one meter, as it was just made of wood and had a Volvo engine.

3 RETURN OF THE JEDI

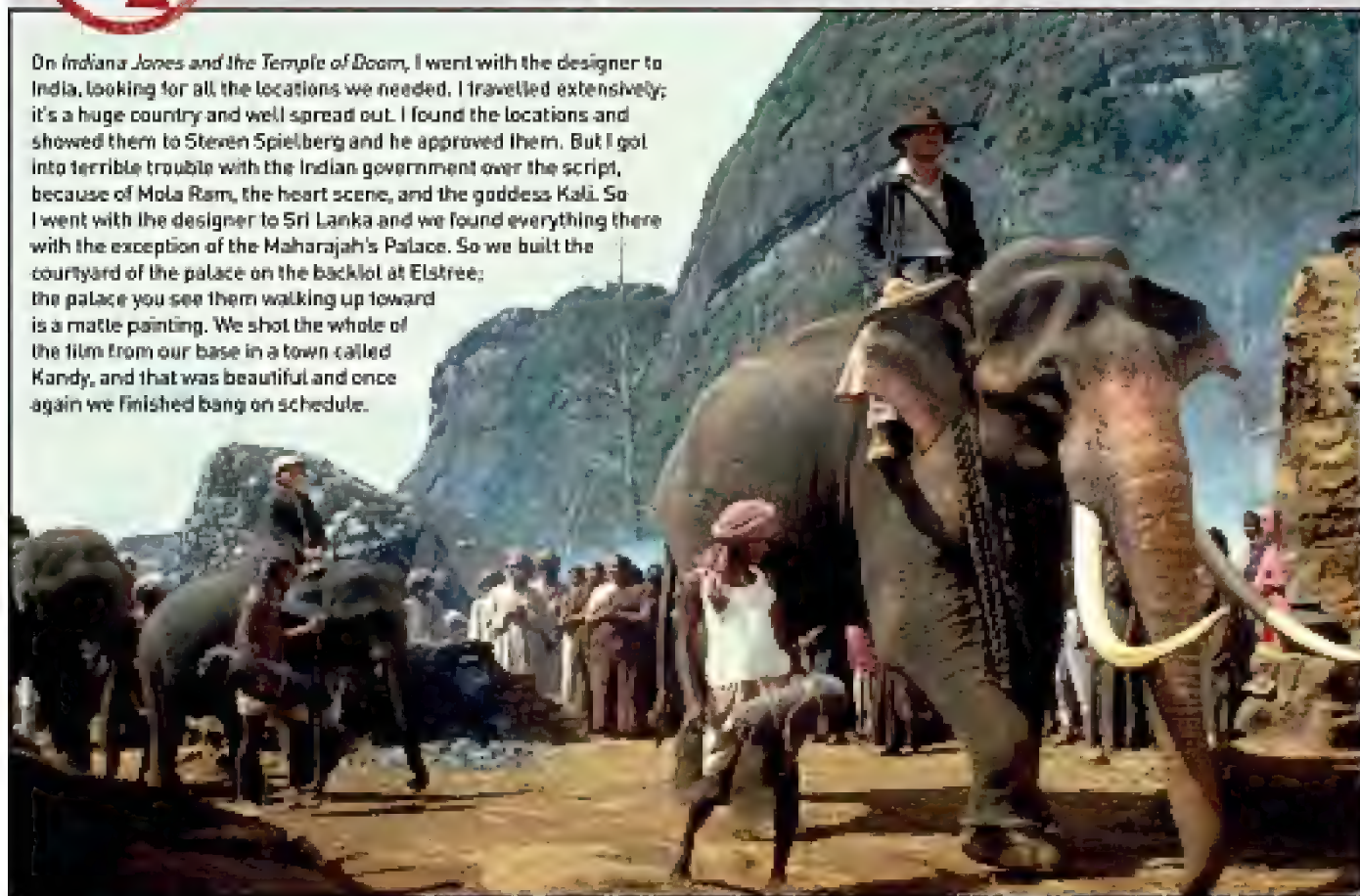


On *Return of the Jedi*, we went to the absolute south-eastern point of California, on the edge of the state to shoot the exterior of Jabba's barge and the sarlacc pit. We were actually living in Yuma, Arizona. There was an hour's time difference between the two States, but we just kept on Yuma time. From there, we went up to the absolute north-western point of California to a tiny little resort called Smith River, which we took over with our production offices. Most of the crew stayed in a place called Crescent City. The Oregon state line was about two miles up the road at a place called Brookings, which was where all the Ewoks stayed! The two locations were so diverse, but so close: the desert and Redwood trees.

4

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

On *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, I went with the designer to India, looking for all the locations we needed. I travelled extensively; it's a huge country and well spread out. I found the locations and showed them to Steven Spielberg and he approved them. But I got into terrible trouble with the Indian government over the script, because of Mola Ram, the heart scene, and the goddess Kali. So I went with the designer to Sri Lanka and we found everything there with the exception of the Maharajah's Palace. So we built the courtyard of the palace on the backlot at Elstree; the palace you see them walking up toward is a matte painting. We shot the whole of the film from our base in a town called Kandy, and that was beautiful and once again we finished bang on schedule.



5

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE



I was reunited with Sean Connery on *The Last Crusade*. I'd worked with him 19 years earlier on the James Bond film *You Only Live Twice*. We did a lot of the stuff in Spain, and then we went to Venice and on to Jordan for the exterior of the Grail Temple, which we shot at Aqaba. The locations on that were fantastic, because we were able to fly straight from Venice to Aqaba in Jordan because we had charter flights, and another location called Petra was just up the road, about an hour and a half drive away. And again we finished on schedule. The only thing that I could not find in Jordan was a flat piece of desert for the end shot as the sun is setting. We eventually shot it in Amarillo, Texas. We'd wrapped up in England and I was in the States for postproduction. We flew from L.A., and had horses double for the horses in Jordan (which were doubling for the horses we'd used in Spain). We flew into Amarillo, did a few setups, and waited for the sun to set. And it worked perfectly. We packed up, flew back to L.A., and didn't even stay the night there!



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THE SAGA CONTINUES....

NEXT ISSUE

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